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ABSTRACT

This handbook is concerned with one specialized form of participation: participatory planning. It is based on several years of experience in participatory planning and is infused with the bias that sees a great deal of potential good in expanded participation in general and in participatory planning in particular. It is also recognized that participatory planning is difficult, time-consuming, and requires skills and methods that may not be present at the moment. The first part of the handbook spells out some arguments for forms of participatory planning. In the second section, the important background considerations relating to participatory planning are discussed. The third section is on organizing and managing a participatory planning process. This section includes a discussion of the relationship between participatory planning activities and the rest of the school system decision-making processes. (Author/IRT)

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HANDBOOK OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN EDUCATION

A compilation of suggestions on conducting planning with many participants in schools and school districts, mostly learned the hard way.

Rudolph Johnson
Palo Alto Unified School District
Palo Alto, California

September, 1976

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Something very healthy is happening in America today; it will profoundly influence our country's future. The centers of human vitality, imagination, and authority, formerly few and centralized, are becoming many and dispersed. I see the future of this young and still under-developed land becoming one of diversity, not uniformity; decentralized, not centralized. We are seeing the individual citizen resume a positive and ever more consequential influence on his own life.

David E. Lilienthal
The Smithsonian
July, 1976 - p. 108

PREFACE

Background to this Handbook

This Handbook was developed in the Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California. The work was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Education to study participatory planning. More specifically, the grant was to study Project Redesign.

The Palo Alto Unified School District is a suburban K-12 district comprising 13,000 students, 20 elementary schools, and 6 secondary schools. In 1971, the Superintendent, Harold Santee, initiated efforts to involve the entire school/community in an examination and "redesign" of the educational system - "...to meet the needs of students growing up in the uncertain, fast-changing, complex world of the 1970's and the early 1980's." The school board enthusiastically approved the Superintendent's proposal and appointed a committee of 31 persons to create a structure by which the school district could proceed to produce a long-range plan. This group, labeled the "Convening Committee", was composed of citizens, staff, and students.

The structure formulated by this committee was endorsed by the Board, and Project Redesign was thereby born in January, 1973. It was to be composed of volunteers from all segments of the school district. A small paid staff would carry out technical and secretarial tasks for the volunteer planners. The main product of the Project would be delivery of a long-range plan by mid - 1975.

Structurally, Project Redesign was to be coordinated by a small, eleven-member group, called the "Design Management Team". The first task of this group was to be the organization of several task forces charged with carrying out studies of the school district to produce a data base for comprehensive planning. This was to be followed by the organization of planning teams charged with developing proposals; and ad hoc groups, which would be "self-appointed or special interest groups", working on some issues for inclusion in the long-range plan. During the life of the Project, seven task forces and eleven planning teams were in operation. One group of primary teachers at first emerged as an ad hoc group, but then requested that it be designated as a planning team in primary education.

The planning teams met weekly or bi-weekly for an average of nine months. They produced planning proposals in the form of "operational goals" for

inclusion in the Project's long-range plan. The task of the Design Management Team later in its life became that of synthesizing all operational goals into a single document. The plan, which included 36 operational goals, was delivered to the Board in September of 1975. Action on the plan was accomplished in stages and was completed in the fall of 1976.

Project Redesign was an experiment. This Handbook does not summarize the Project, but presents what was learned through experience and study within it about the theory and practice of participatory planning. I would not recommend to any school or district that they conduct a Project Redesign. I do recommend participatory planning, provided it is understood and well managed. It is my hope that this Handbook will make a contribution toward such understanding and management.

Numerous research methods were used to produce some of the insights presented in the following pages. Approximately 120 active Project participants were observed and completed questionnaires. Planning team coordinators were interviewed on completion of their team's work. Board members and key administrators were interviewed twice during the Project. Minutes and other printed documents were examined.

Persons interested in detailed study of Project Redesign are invited to request full reports from the author or from the National Institute of Education. These include a detailed analysis of voluntary participation in the Project, a complete case study of the Project, and a paper presented at the 1976 convention of the American Educational Research Association, which analyzes some theoretical issues, all in addition to this Handbook.

Rudolph Johnson, Director
Reform in Intermediate and Secondary
Education Project
Palo Alto Unified School District
September, 1976

Acknowledgments

To Tom McCollough, friend and colleague, Director of Project Redesign; to Nelly Stromquist, research associate extraordinary; to Carla Edlefson, insightful critic and fellow researcher; to Marge Caldwell, the flamboyant and excellent secretary; to Ruth Spector, whose competence and grace make working with her a pleasure; to scores of Project Redesign participants who put in thousands of hours of time, though very busy people, and who are friends as well as colleagues in this Project; to all these people, a very inadequate thanks.

Thanks also to the administration of the school district and the Board of Education, and to colleagues and consultants in other institutions. Jim Shultz played a special role as outside consultant throughout the Project, and made many helpful comments on an earlier version of this manuscript.

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CHAPTER I THE CASE FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Introductory Statement

For better or for worse, we are in an era of participatory planning in education. Lots of people are becoming involved in such planning.

If you are a school administrator in California, you will, now or in the near future, develop school or district plans to meet the requirements of the Early Childhood Education program in elementary schools, or the RISE program in secondary schools.

These plans are not usually developed by special planning staffs. Very few California districts have specialists in planning. You almost certainly cannot avoid direct personal involvement in this kind of planning as an administrator, and you must share that pleasure with teachers, parents, and others. In the case of secondary schools, this includes students.

Educators in other states are not immune. Florida and Oregon have statewide programs mandating extensive participation in planning and goal-setting. Other states have similar programs.

This is all part of a general movement toward expanded participatory roles. The PTA provides a good illustration. Lillie Herndon, the 1973 national president of the PTA, spoke to the membership at the beginning of that year as follows:

> As we begin another year of work, I would like to ask each of you as a PTA member to determine the needs of children in your community. Set new goals based on these needs and then plan an action program designed to achieve, in greater measure than ever before, that which is desirable for every child. And as all of us - parents, teachers, and students - focus on every child in our work, PTA will surely grow in power and credibility.[1]

1. Saxe, Richard W., School-Community Interaction, Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975, p. 61.

A planning model for the Lansing, Michigan school district, published in 1973, contains significant comments on public involvement:

> The involvement of the community in planning the school program is relatively new in educational thinking, when one is considering meaningful participation. The Lansing School District embarked upon this concept nearly three years ago. By continued refinement, a working model has evolved which requires participation by parents, students, and agency groups as full participants in determining the needs, priority determination, educational change, and implementation processes.[2]

This trend toward greater participation in planning is not confined to education. Recently, the National Park Services attempted to set forth a long-range plan for the future of Yosemite National Park. The plan, developed by professionals, represented a heavy investment of time and money. When it was made public, however, the outcry was so strong that it had to be scrapped. The expectations of the public for Yosemite were not adequately met in the published plan. The public was invited to participate in developing a revised version by means of hearings and questionnaires.

Participation in school district life by persons who are neither employees nor students has become a major management concern for many educators. Participation in planning is linked closely to participation in other school functions. We have increasingly come to realize that who participates voluntarily, and in what capacity, may greatly affect the success of the educational process. Research in this area is very murky. More discussion of this point will appear later in this Handbook. Note, however, that a school district typically has no control (or very little) over who comes as a student;

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2. Long-Range Planning System: A Planning Model for the Lansing School District, Lansing School District, Lansing, Michigan, September 1973.

increasingly, it has little control over who works as a professional, since most professionals have tenure and few new teachers are being hired. On the other hand, an administrator can have considerable influence on who participates voluntarily, in what capacity, and in what structure. Too often this fact is overlooked. Participation on a voluntary basis is still widely regarded as a side issue to the real work of the district. That attitude may change.

On close examination, participation by non-professionals turns out to be a highly complex phenomenon - at least as complex as who teaches, who administers, or who learns what in the classroom.[3] At this time, however, there is considerable guesswork and uncertainty about appropriate and successful methods of public involvement.

In this Handbook, we will also be concerned with expanded participation by professionals, i.e., teachers and administrators who voluntarily work in a school process which is not part of their contractual obligation. Some look upon expanded participation as a passing fad. Others actually see it as a disastrous development which may paralyze the ability of schools and other institutions to act at all.[4]

In this Handbook, we will be concerned with one specialized form of participation: participatory planning. The term itself will need definition, since this is a relatively new practice in schools. Our bias is with those who see a great deal of potential good in expanded participation in general, and in participatory planning in particular. We also recognize that it is difficult, time-consuming, and requires skills and methods which many of us do not at

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3. For an introduction to some of these complexities, see Stromquist, Nelly Peñaloza, with Rudolph Johnson, "Who Participates? A Field Study of Participation in Planning in a School District." Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California, 1976.

4. Benveniste, Guy, "Consequences of Excessive Educational Planning". Educational Planning, Vol. 1, No. 2, October 1974, page 1.

present possess. This Handbook is based on several years of experience in participatory planning. We hope it will be useful if you are using or considering the use of a participatory planning process.

Even if you are not in a situation in which some form of participatory planning is required by law, you may wish to do some. Good arguments exist for trying it with some issues in your school or district.

We will spell out some of these arguments in the first section of the Handbook. This section will introduce you to some key concepts of participatory planning and how they may relate to your management style. In the second section, we will discuss important background considerations relating to participatory planning in schools. The third section is on organizing and managing a participatory planning process. Here we will present some hard-won insights which we hope will help you to avoid a few pitfalls. This section includes a discussion of the relationship between your participatory planning activities and the rest of the school system decision processes.

DEFINING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING: WHAT IS IT? HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM ANY OTHER KIND OF PLANNING? FROM SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL?

Participatory planning is a unique activity. It bears some resemblance to other types of planning because it usually includes problem analysis, data collection, consideration of alternatives, and the writing of plans. At the same time, it is very different from a conventional planning process. By participatory planning we mean the involvement of a diverse group of people in setting some directions and making some important decisions in your school or district.

Participatory planning is an organizational change and problem-solving process. If you neither expect nor desire significant organizational change, or have no educational problems to solve which may require organizational change, participatory planning would probably not be appropriate. You

still need planning, of course. A school district needs plans which provide information on future enrollments, building needs, and staff requirements. Making up the budget entails much planning. These types of planning do not necessarily involve changes in the way the system operates. The roles that teachers and supervisors will play may remain essentially the same as now. There may be little need for extensive involvement in such routine planning beyond normal consultations with staff for purposes of clarification and advice on program modifications.

Participatory planning is not focused on routine administrative planning, but on change. For example, if you are fortunate enough to manage an expanding school system, you may feel that some basic issues about the new schools should be studied. Do you really want to build another conventional building, or would the needs of the community be better served by something different? Will more students be involved in off-campus learning than in the past? Will the community accept that? How will that affect building needs? Will individualized instruction or personalized learning mean that a different space configuration would be desirable within the new buildings?

Such questions could be answered by experts. They may be answered better if you use a participatory process to involve staff, students, and parents in seeking the answers. Even more importantly, the answers may be more readily accepted by the community and the staff if they participate in finding them.

A shrinking school system has some of the same problems, except that they may be more difficult to solve. How can you achieve significant changes without new facilities and with a shrinking budget? Once again, you may find much value in public and staff involvement in arriving at your plans.

Some planning does not call for significant organizational changes, except in scale. Once again, planning without much participation may be the best solution, unless pressure for participation is very great. Participatory planning is most appropriate if you desire or expect changes in the educational

program, and have concerns about acceptance and understanding of these programs by staff, parents, or students; or if you seek ideas and solutions from a broader base than is available through standard channels.

Participatory planning, by definition, brings persons into a planning process whose normal job descriptions or roles do not include planning. These may include teachers, parents, students, and others.

Participatory planning is normally accomplished by means of special planning groups. The persons who are brought in as members of these groups become planners. This needs to be said to distinguish their role from other roles, such as that of advisory committee members, who are not planners. More will be said about the planner role later in this Handbook. Planners work with information, interact with each other and with other educators, parents, and students, and make judgments between alternatives. Their role is limited and focused. A planning group is neither a mini-school-board nor a general advisory group, but a special group with a special role. Sometimes advisory groups have planning responsibilities. In that case, the two functions should be separated.

Participatory planning requires the active participation of the chief administrator. If the planning is at the school level, this means the principal; at the district level, the superintendent. The role of the chief administrator is crucial and requires close examination.

One viewpoint is that the chief administrator must be the chief planner.[5] In other words, he must be personally involved in every phase of the planning, and will probably serve as chairman of the major steering committee or council.

An alternative viewpoint is that the chief administrator must make it known that he/she strongly desires the planning process to be successful,

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5. Hardy, James M., Corporate Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, New York: Association Press, 1972.

and must remain knowledgeable and involved, but should also remain slightly apart from the process.

Three major reasons may be given for caution in placing the principal or superintendent in the central driver's seat in participatory planning.[6]

1. In group situations, all participants may defer to the principal (or superintendent) as the person with the greatest power and status. In some administrative situations, that is necessary and desirable. In a planning situation, such deference may be dysfunctional. Important viewpoints may not be spoken or, if spoken, may not receive adequate attention.

2. The biases of the principal or superintendent, even unconscious biases, may direct the work along traditional and conventional lines, even when it would be desirable to raise and consider some unconventional solutions and practices.

3. Administrators must often make decisions on the basis of very concrete facts. It is possible under the circumstances to lose touch with the more intuitive and creative side of things. This is not to argue in favor of dreaming or playing with unrealistic ideas, but to seek to create a planning situation in which issues can be seen in new and possibly more creative ways than might normally prevail in committee and administrative meetings within the school or district.

The decision as to the role of the chief administrator in a participatory planning process will probably be in your hands as the chief administrator. Making a wise decision on this matter demands a high level of self-knowledge and possible willingness to let go of direct and immediate

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6. These points were made by James Shultz, an organizational consultant with broad experience, in private conversations.

control for the sake of a successful planning process. The chief administrator must neither overwhelm and dominate the process nor withdraw from the planning process or fail to give it unqualified support. If the latter happens, that will quickly be known to everyone in the school or district and will seriously damage the process.

Since every administrator is different, your role should be discussed with an outsider and/or openly negotiated with the participants in the work, so that the most effective solution to this key question can be found.[7]

This discussion leads to a working definition: Participatory planning is an organizational change process involving persons whose job descriptions or roles do not normally include planning, with the chief administrator in the key position. The objective is an improved educational program. The plans

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7. Participatory planning is an organizational change process. There are both advantages and disadvantages whenever the chief administrator of an organization also doubles as a change agent. The advantages lie chiefly in the strong influence which the administration can bring to bear on attitudes and behavior of others. As to the disadvantages, five are listed by Shultz and Winstead:

    a. His authority and role can create resistance, miscommunication, or over-commitment.

    b. He tends to be out of date in terms of emerging knowledge and techniques of change.

    c. He tends to overplay a specific idea or approach.

    d. He lacks the time and energy for follow-through.

    e. He must maintain the balance of stability and change.

From Shultz, James, and Philip Winstead, The Educational Development Officer: A Catalyst for Change in Higher Education, Durham, N.C.: National Laboratory for Higher Education, 1971.

that are developed on paper are very important as part of the process, but they are significant only insofar as they play a role in the organizational change process, much as a blueprint is important only because it serves a useful purpose in the construction of a building.

The subject of the Handbook, then, is participatory planning, a people process in schools utilized to bring about change. We will be concerned with defining it, structuring it, organizing it, and managing it.

MORE ON PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The management of education has not been highly change-oriented. It has taken its direction from tradition and experience. Many practices with which we are familiar are based less on data and thorough consideration of alternatives than on intuitive good judgment.

Much of the work of school administrators does involve seeking out the views of a wide range of people, gathering information, and exploring alternatives before making decisions. These are all elements in participatory planning. Participatory planning tends to make these elements more explicit and more elaborate. As an administrator, you must decide when a participatory planning process is desirable. Considerable time and energy is involved, your own as well as other people's. Not everything can be handled by such a process.

The decision will depend upon the extent to which significant organizational changes are desired, and the extent to which people must be involved in the changes if they are to succeed. Time and staff constraints will also be determining factors. Hopefully, the lack of expertise in managing a participatory process will not be the deciding factor.

Participatory planning is very dissimilar to some forms of planning. Often in planning the chief function of subordinates is to feed information upward in the organization. Decisions are made at the top on the basis of that

information. These decisions are translated into plans, which are then transmitted downward to be carried out. Planning which fits this description is often necessary and appropriate. It is sometimes inappropriate and unworkable, particularly if changes are sought in educational programs.[8]

Participatory planning is often more similar to an organizational development process than to a centralized planning process.[9] In an organizational development effort, persons throughout an organization are involved in examining issues and problems, finding solutions, and accepting and carrying out these solutions. Solutions are implemented, not because they are transmitted from the top, but because they have been internalized as good decisions by those who will carry them out.

In other words, much conventional planning is top-down planning. Participatory planning deeply involves the people at the top but also involves a great many other people, not only as information-passers and plan-receivers, but as active planners. It is bottom-up planning as well as top-down planning.

Participatory planning has dimensions which are missing or given little recognition in many conventional planning activities. These include the necessary wrestling with values and value differences between groups, as well as the translation of values into programs. The very meaning of the educational system for a community and for educators may undergo needed development during such a planning process.

This is a difficult job. This kind of planning is doubtless easier under some circumstances than others. It may be easier when the value differences between educators and the community are small. It may be even more

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8. Derr, C. Brooklyn, "The Utility of Organization Development Methods for Educational Planning," November 1970. ERIC Systems, ED046115.

9. Not everyone is familiar with the term "organizational development". In some nonprofit organizations, "development" means fund-raising. Organizational development here refers to a process of planned organizational change involving diagnosis and planned intervention.

important under the more difficult circumstances, however, when value differences and differences in priorities are large.

Some additional points about participatory planning may help to clarify the management task involved.

Participatory planning is a learning process.[10] It is a learning process for everyone who is directly involved and for the organization as a whole. Citizens will learn about their school system. Teachers will learn about their administration. Administrators will learn about the community and the staff. It is important to go into a participatory planning process with the expectation of learning and the expectation of teaching.

Expectations for the educational system may be raised by a participatory planning project. This is troubling in these times of cutbacks and numerous difficulties. The gamble is that as expectations are raised, support for education will go up so that the number of persons prepared to go to bat for schools will increase. It may also happen that sympathy for the problems of administration will be increased. That has often been the case.

Participatory planning may raise new problems, as well as solve old ones. It will bring up possibilities that have not been considered before. As new solutions are proposed, the possibility for misjudgments and error is increased. This may raise your level of anxiety as an administrator. It is important to establish a climate in which there is tolerance for error as part of the process of learning how to run better schools. Fortunately, participatory planning helps make such a climate possible.

Several additional specific problems often trouble administrators. Some of them are as follows:

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10. Michael, Donald, On Learning to Plan - and Planning to Learn, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

1. The problem of time.

   Participatory planning is very time-consuming. Anyone who claims otherwise has never done it. It also takes time to prove its worth, perhaps a matter of years.

2. The rationality problem.

   Sometimes people expect that a planning process will lead to perfect rationality. The very word "planning" conveys to some the notion that decisions will be made by precise formulas instead of by judgment and experience based on values. The fact is, of course, that the need for judgment on the basis of ambiguous evidence always remains. Nevertheless, a successful participatory process should increase the amount of useful evidence and generally improve the process of decision-making, particularly in the case of significant organizational change.

3. The problem of non-accountability.

   It is sometimes troubling to involve people in a process leading to decision-making when the legal authority rests with you, the administrator, and with the board of education. Participatory planning must link up with the decision-making process; otherwise, it is an exercise in public relations which may well backfire. Accountability in the best sense, of course, is not accountability to the school district or the state as legal entities, but accountability to our clients. Good participatory planning is intended as a tool to help us serve those clients better and thus fulfill our requirement of accountability.

These, and other problems, will be dealt with in more detail in the pages to follow. Our bias remains: participatory planning is difficult, but in the current state of education and society, it offers some methods which may help us all to do a better job. It is also on the side of humanistic, democratic values. People should help shape their own institutions - their government, their school system, and their own lives. That bias we freely admit.

THE CASE FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING: SOME HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ELABORATION

The case for participatory planning is not based on the belief that parents are more knowledgeable than educators, nor that teachers are better able to run the schools than principals. The professionalism and expertise of both teachers and administrators are vital to education. At the same time, certain kinds of knowledge, attitudes and opinions held by the public, staff, students, and others become crucial in times of change.

Participatory planning is also not simply a form of power-sharing. When it is effective, it should increase everyone's "power" because the whole system will be more effective. There is ample evidence that "power" should never be thought of as something which comes only in a fixed amount, so that increasing the influence of teachers and parents will be thought to undercut the administration. Rather, power is variable. Everyone can be more influential in school systems. This is not a romantic or an idealistic notion, but an argument based on years of organizational research.[11]

Some older views on participation

It has long been held that adherence to democratic ideals requires participation in school planning and decision-making by teachers. John Dewey advanced the argument decades ago:

> Hence, if the general tenor of what I have said about the democratic ideal and method is anywhere near the truth, it must be said that the democratic principle requires that every teacher should have some regular and organic way in which he can, directly or through representatives democratically chosen, participate in the formation of the controlling aims, methods, and materials of the school of which he is a part.[12]

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11. Tannenbaum, Arnold S., Control in Organizations, New York: McGraw Hill, 1968.

12. Dewey, John, "Democracy and Educational Administration". School and Society, XIV, No. 1162, 1937: pp. 457-462.

In Dewey, failure to involve teachers in school planning constitutes a serious breach in democratic practice, with serious social consequences. Many will agree in principle, but the organizational structure of schools and teacher-administrator relationships makes such participation difficult and uneven at best.

The argument for parent participation for reasons of democratic idealism is very old, going back to the origins of the American public school system. The public right to shape public institutions is an argument often heard. This is countered by the argument that schools require some independence from parent and community pressures in order to operate effectively. School systems were consolidated partly to achieve some independence from local community control and, by a variety of means, insulated themselves from direct community involvement.[13]

Nevertheless, the democratic ideal remains: in a democracy, the school system belongs to the people, not to the state nor to the educators, and the people have the right to shape and direct it.

A different argument for participatory planning is drawn from studies in organizational effectiveness of the past three decades. Without attempting a detailed discussion, the argument is that apart from all questions of democratic ideals, participation in planning and decision-making, if properly managed, leads to more effective decision-making and more effective management. Participatory practices, by this argument, benefit the managers as well as the clients and subordinates. The literature on this subject is extensive. See Owen for a discussion of this point.[14]

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13. Tyack, David, personal conversations. Professor Tyack teaches History of Education at Stanford University.

14. Owen, Robert G., Organizational Behavior in Schools, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Greater effectiveness through participation is argued from two major perspectives. One is the political and social psychological argument, based on the need for commitment: participation is necessary to develop ownership of plans and proposals by those whom they will affect, in order to bring about effective implementation. A different case is the argument from synergy: application of diverse minds to problems will produce better solutions than restricting the thinking to only a few technicians and managers at the top. Both arguments can lead to broader participation in planning, but have somewhat different implications for the structure of such participation.

More recent viewpoints on participatory planning.

More recent arguments for participation in planning take several directions. A summary of some of these arguments will include the following:

(a) The argument from democratic idealism is updated and made more compelling by contemporary writers, such as Alvin Toffler, who believes that a critical problem of the world is the increasing inability of the average person to control his/her own life because of the complexities of modern institutions, such as school systems. In his view, broad-scale participatory planning is essential in all aspects of society as the only alternative to continued loss of freedom. Schools should take the lead in becoming institutions whose direction and policies are set by participatory planning.[15] Many believe that all public institutions have moved into a new era in which different roles for clients will be demanded.

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15. Toffler, Alvin, "What is Anticipatory Democracy?" The Futurist, Vol. IX, No. 5, October 1975, pp. 224-229.

Critics charge that visions of participatory planning, such as those of Toffler, are a romantic throwback stemming from yearning for the "pure democracy" of ancient Greece and the old New England Town Meeting. Toffler and others will respond that those older forms of decision-making are obviously too simplistic for modern times, but that new methods of democratic participation can and will be developed, unless we are all willing to give up our freedoms and live in a managed society over which average citizens have no control.

There is a dilemma. People do not want to be planned for. More highly-educated people may be better equipped to state such a dislike, but no one enjoys the feeling that the important decisions about his/her life are made by someone else, whether one is a low-income person in the city or an affluent suburbanite. Yet people do not always want to give energy to the arduous tasks of planning and, indeed, frequently do not have the energy to devote because of other pressures.

(b) A compelling argument for participation in any form is that participation helps develop community support for the school system. There is little hard research evidence on this point, but it is accepted among many educators that people who are actively involved in the schools are supporters of the system. If participation in all forms increases community support for the schools, that is a crucial factor in this time of sagging public support.

(c) Participatory planning may be a means of broadening and regulating community input to the school system. In the absence of a system for public input, we may bow to the pressure of only a few influential activists in the community who do not represent broad community opinions or desires.

(d) Participatory planning is increasingly seen as an educational process. In times of rapid social change like these, we are constantly reminded of the need for continuing education for everyone. School systems cannot afford teachers, administrators, nor parents who continue for year

after year without seriously examining their views and experiencing some updating about the goals and methods of education. A well-conducted participatory process is an educational process for everyone and, in a real sense, for the school or school system as an organization. This argument is supported by the writing of Stanford sociologist, John Meyer, who argues that the effective controls over schools do not lie in political or administrative machinery, but in the ideas about education in the minds of community members.[16]

The implication is that school systems wishing to progress are obliged to work with the community in an educational process to re-examine and update these controlling ideas.

(e) Participatory planning may be seen as the creation of "new settings for interaction".[17] Closely related to the argument for participatory planning as an educational process is the argument for participatory planning as a means of creating settings within schools and school districts in which vital educational issues can be worked on by widely diverse people in non-adversarial settings. Teachers and administrators have remarked how unusual it is really to discuss education in an educational organization. Daily pressures and problems often seem to prevent or drive out occasions when interested people can seriously work together on important educational questions, other than those arising from pressure groups or stemming from organizational problems. Experience in participatory planning has shown that participants find serious and sustained interaction very rewarding. Teachers sometimes learn for the first time about the practices and viewpoints of other teachers, often to the enrichment of their own work. Parents gain first-hand

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16. Meyer, John, "Notes on the Structure of Educational Organizations?" (with Brian Rowan) - Revised version. Department of Sociology, Stanford University, 1975. (Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, August 1975.)

17. The concept of the creation of new settings is from Sarason, Seymour B., The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972.

knowledge of the educational process, and educators learn the parents' viewpoints from a new perspective. Research evidence demonstrates that mixed groups which include a wide range of educators, parents, and others have advantages over groups entirely composed of teachers or parents.[18] For some purposes, committees sponsored by the school system have many advantages over groups which are entirely outside the system, such as parent pressure groups. They also have advantages over groups within the system which closely mirror the organizational structure, such as curriculum committees. The point can be summed up simply: to infuse the schools with new thinking and to help solve difficult ongoing problems, one good technique is to create new groups with new people in new relationships, and help them to work together in a sustained effort on the problems or concerns in question.

(f) Participatory planning is a way to deal with organizational rigidities. All organizations develop practices and norms of behavior which, for the most part, serve the organization well for purposes of stability and smooth solution of problems. On the other hand, sometimes these practices and norms can get in the way and become a hindrance to desirable changes. Participatory planning can serve as a vehicle to get around undesirable rigidities. Any participatory planning effort may be seen as a "temporary system". Within a temporary system, individuals can behave differently than in the permanent system because there is no necessary implication of permanent organizational change. For example, in participatory planning, teachers may obtain information directly from assistant superintendents without first going through channels. Within the planning role, teachers, students, parents, and assistant superintendents may interact as colleagues or peers, rather than as managers, subordinates, or clients. In other words, people can temporarily wear different hats. This does not necessarily imply permanent change in their behavior or in the way the organization operates. It may lead to improved

18. Stromquist, Nelly P., and Rudolph Johnson, "Participatory Educational Planning: Report of a Field Experiment." Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, April 1976.

organizational functioning if time is taken to reflect on what is happening. For example, it was noted from observation of meetings in one school district that new ideas were usually criticized very heavily, even before they were fully explored or explained. Such a practice may make the process of improvement unnecessarily difficult. Within a participatory planning process, in which attention is paid to such behavior, alternative norms can be established in which new ideas are treated positively, pending a fair hearing.

The advantages of temporary systems have been discussed extensively.[19] Education may benefit greatly from their use. Participatory planning systems are examples of temporary systems.

(g) Participatory planning is a means of "futuring".

The practice of "futuring" has become more common in recent years. To some, the very term sounds like crystal-ball-gazing, unrelated to current responsibilities. Others are finding that it can be highly useful. Possible futures can be actively explored as a prelude to making decisions which will help to shape the real future. This is happening in a growing number of public and private organizations. Participatory planning provides a setting in which such futuring can take place within schools.

Some futurists argue that only by becoming futurists can educators escape the lurch from crisis to crisis which has come to characterize some school systems. It is difficult to involve some people in discussing the future because it seems like an arid intellectual exercise which is unimportant, compared with working on immediate problems. This is true both in wealthy communities and among the urban poor.[20]

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19. Zand, Dale E., "Collateral Organization: A New Change Strategy", Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, V. 10, No. 1, 1974.

20. Edelston, Harold C., and Ferne K. Kolodner, "Are the Poor Capable of Planning for Themselves?" Citizen Participation in Urban Development, V. 1, Washington: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968.

An important philosophical point is at stake here, as well as a misunderstanding. Some place the study of the future in the realm of pure science. They see it as a job involving probabilities and projections, to be carried out by special scientists and technicians, probably ones inclined toward dreaming and wishful thinking. Others reply that the important thing is our intention concerning the future, our desires about it, and our imaginings about it. These are seen as important because the future "controls" the present. For example, Stinchcombe argued from a study of high school youth that the ideas held by youth about their own futures caused their rebellion against school in the present.[21] Futuring may be a highly practical activity worthy of our attention, particularly because of the speed of change our students are facing as they leave school.

Futuring should also mean that some issues can be managed more effectively than otherwise because lead time can be increased. Decisions are less intertwined with current administrative details and personal defensiveness.

Concluding Statement

The case for participatory planning is complex. Some of the arguments go right to the heart of what we do as educators. Whether or not you find any or all of these arguments compelling, they do appear with increasing frequency in the press, and are heard in schools, communities, and legislatures.

We break new ground as we experience participatory planning. The next section will discuss some important background considerations. The third section, which is the longest part of this Handbook, deals with the job of structuring, organizing, and managing a process for such planning.

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21. Stinchcombe, Arthur, Rebellion in a High School, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1964.

CHAPTER II PREPARING FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

In this chapter, we will discuss some issues which need to be considered before setting up a participatory planning project. This Handbook is concerned with participatory planning projects which are closely related to, but do not replace, the main management structure of schools and school systems. Our interest focuses on planning activities which are set up to accomplish specific, limited objectives.

Planning models are available which replace all existing school management practices with new practices rooted in data-based planning. That's an entirely different subject. Two examples of such comprehensive planning-management models are the School Planning, Evaluation, and Communication System (SPECS) developed at the Center for Educational Policy and Management at Eugene, Oregon[22] and the system described in the Handbook of Comprehensive Planning in Schools, developed at Research for Better Schools, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.[23]

A participatory planning project set up to accomplish limited objectives usually makes use of special groupings of people. Such special groupings may be called a temporary system. Another term is "collateral organization".[24] A collateral organization is a special sub-organization set up to achieve certain limited purposes. It brings people together into a task which is outside their normal responsibilities and places them in new and perhaps unfamiliar roles. In participatory planning, teachers, parents, and students are brought together with administrators and others to become planners.

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22. Nagle, John M., and Harold E. Walker, School Planning, Evaluation, and Communication System, Eugene, Oregon: Center for Educational Policy and Management, 1975.

23. Temkin, Sanford, Michael D. Marvin, Hsuan de Lorme, and Herbert Denby, Handbook of Comprehensive Planning in Schools, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Educational Technology Publications, 1975.

24. This term is borrowed from Zand, Dale E., "Collateral Organization: A New Change Strategy", Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1974.

These special planning systems are set up to do tasks which might be accomplished in some other way. For example, plans could be developed by the principal in consultation with a few others; or regular permanent administrative committees might be assigned the task; or consultants could be hired. These methods may lack certain advantages which can be gained through broader participation, as discussed in the first chapter.

In this Handbook, we are focusing on all situations where a decision has been made to involve broader-than-usual groups of people in some planning process. Such a planning process may concentrate on any issue or set of issues relevant to education, such as developing ways to get more students into off-campus learning situations; improving school/community relations; revising part of the curriculum; improving student/teacher relationships; planning a new building; or some combination of objectives.

SECTION A - SOME BACKGROUND ISSUES PRELIMINARY TO PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

1. Participation in education: what is it and how much of it goes on in your district?

Schools and school districts differ greatly in the extent to which participatory practices are used. This includes both the extent to which parents and students are involved in school roles other than simply being parents and students, and the extent to which participatory management is utilized within the paid staff.

Consider the over-all picture of citizen or parent participation in your school or district. First of all, who or what are volunteer participants?

Citizen or parent participants may be described as persons who enter the schools to be involved in some process considered by educators to be important, without the expectation of monetary remuneration. This may include teaching as a volunteer, aide, or guest speaker; sponsoring students in off-campus learning situations; advising students; serving as a committee or board member; providing staff support in some volunteer or auxiliary role;

working in school politics as a campaign worker; or even conducting research. For their efforts, participants receive something of value, not including money, and the organization receives services in return. Today, these activities often go far beyond the roles open to citizens in former times.

Participants are not employees, clients, or guests. They come close to what voluntary organizations, such as churches, call members. By virtue of the services they are providing, they have a right to be inside the organization. They have and deserve a certain organizational legitimacy. They are there for a purpose. In many schools, such individuals are present in very large numbers, and in many cases, these numbers have increased substantially during the past several years. The Palo Alto school district, with 14,000 students, has as many as 5000 volunteer participants in a given year. School systems have developed many new methods for recruiting and making good use of such participants. Teachers and administrators have had to learn some new management practices to work with volunteers effectively. Often these practices are similar to those used in organizations such as the YWCA and the Red Cross. Do the educational benefits outweigh the costs of increased participation? Is reluctance to expand participation based on educational considerations or on the lack of confidence and skills on the part of educators to make maximum use of citizen resources? These questions are difficult to answer. In any case, more and more schools are making heavy use of volunteer participants, and many educators find their help very valuable.

Types of participation currently in use in your school or district may be mapped in order to obtain an over-all picture of the current situation, compared with the possibilities. Figure 1 provides one way to do this:

Figure 1 [25]

Forms of Educational Involvement by Level of Participation/Degree of Accessibility

	High Accessibility	Low Accessibility
Action-level participation	PTA members School volunteers Classroom volunteers	PTA leadership
Policy-level participation	School board or school tax elections Interest groups Participatory planning	Advisory committees Task forces Study groups Board of Education

The figure serves to illustrate the range of possibilities for participation, using two major dimensions: the ease of becoming involved as a participant; and involvement in direct educational work as contrasted with involvement in establishing directions and policies for the school system.

This kind of mapping may suggest types of participation not used extensively in your school or district which may deserve to be expanded. Perhaps the present structure has the effect of excluding certain types of participants. For example, employed persons may not play a very significant role except at the board of education level. If that is the case, the situation deserves a hard look. Schools are too important to exclude whole groups merely because of the way things are structured. Members of excluded groups may be providing valuable services to other organizations, some of which could benefit the school.

The focus of this Handbook is on participation in the lower half of Figure 1. Participatory planning is a means for helping develop plans and policies. It shares this role with advisory committees, task forces, boards of education,

25. Stromquist and Johnson, op. cit.

special interest groups, and groups which work toward success in school elections. Participatory planning differs from these other activities in many ways. One of the differences is that one of the outcomes is a plan, which we define simply as a set of statements about certain desired future states of the school or system.

2. Planning in Education - What Can Be Planned?

We are dealing with two separable topics: participation and planning. These will be combined to discuss participatory planning. First, a word on the planning side, particularly about what can be planned.

In education, we operate very largely on the assumption of relatively fixed, stable practices. Teachers, parents, and students alike know what these practices are and trust that they will remain relatively unchanged. School administrators have often come to grief by attempting to plan and implement major changes which violated ideas of what is "right" and "proper" in the minds of teachers and parents. For example, most educators can cite situations in which the imposition of year-round schools, or flexible scheduling in high schools, have aroused intense opposition.

In other words, the scope of subjects that are considered appropriate for re-examination or for planning has often been quite restricted. However, mounting problems in many schools and districts and turbulence in the society we serve have the effect of expanding this scope.

Much of what has been labeled "educational planning", particularly long-range educational planning, has not dealt with educational processes directly, but with "para-educational" matters, such as expected enrollments, building needs, and anticipated finances. Learning processes, teacher-student interaction, and similar matters, have not often been the subject for planning.

If the planning programs in schools now required in California in the primary grades become common at other educational levels and in other states, the picture will change considerably.

To illustrate the point about some basic changes that may occur in planning, refer to Figure 2. In this matrix, Webster argues that some

fundamental shifts are occurring. Planning is moving from something done in the central office by experts, which is restricted in scope, to an activity involving whole communities in rethinking some basic issues.

Figure 2

CHANGING VIEWPOINTS IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN THE 1970's [26]
AND AN AGENDA OF QUESTIONS FOR THE 1970's

A. Area of Change	B. Direction of Change, 1960-70		C. Agenda of questions circa 1970
	From	To	
Planning context	Economic growth	Quality of life	What kind of more is better for whom? What goals for society? Whose goals? What future? Whose future?
Planning focus and methods	Para-educational categories	Learning and change processes	What education? For whom? Where? When? How?
Planning/policy	Planning as a technical, value-free activity, segregated from policy-making	Planning involving questions of choice and values and part of a policy-planning process.	Who is to participate? In what process/ activities? On what grounds? By what means?
Locus of planning activity	Planning by centralized professional groups	Participatory planning by multiple publics	
Time horizon	Short-to-medium range planning	Long-term perspective planning	How shall be view the future in planning for education/quality of life? What time perspective can illumine questions of planning context, content, and process?

26. Webster, Maureen M., Planning Educational Futures: Some Basic Questions." Educational Planning, Vol. 2, No. 3, December 1972.

The shifts described in Figure 2 call for moving the focus of educational planning from issues of numbers to growth in quality; from concern about physical facilities to concern about learning processes; from planning as a technical, value-free activity to planning which deals directly with choices and their accompanying values.

This implies that schools will engage in more planning than in the past, and it will be planning of new and different kinds. The question for administrators is: How do we do it?

Difficulties exist which are all too familiar to educators and business persons alike. Schaffer describes occurrences in business planning in which companies exert much effort to develop elaborate plans, then continue to operate much as before.[27] Division managers may be required to come up with short- and long-range goals, but these goals are often ignored when the managers return to the "real" work of running their divisions. Or companies sometimes develop ambitious plans but then do not have the resources nor the skills to carry them out. Even worse, Schaffer argues that a long-range plan can freeze a company into a position which guarantees future obsolescence because of inadequate consideration of possible future developments during the planning process.

Much of Schaffer's analysis applies to schools, as well as to business. He describes two basic problems in planning. The first is trying to accomplish too much with planning. Planning is not a cure-all. It is one tool among many. The second problem described by Schaffer is that planners often use a planning framework that looks exceedingly logical and rational on paper, but does not work in practice. The framework normally starts with the gathering of information and on the basis of this information objectives are formulated.

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27. Schaffer, Robert H., "Putting Action into Planning", Harvard Business Review, Nov.-Dec. 1967, p. 158.

According to Schaffer, it is here that the process often breaks down. The formulation of objectives early in the planning too often results either in simple extrapolations of current trends into the future, which at times turn out to be faulty; or objectives are stated as general expressions of aspirations which are not useful in everyday operations. Another possibility is that setting objectives early in the process will result in a premature call to implement the objectives as plans. All of this often adds up to a planning process which frustrates everyone. Managers may be accused of being unwilling to work on long-range problems, or unwilling to be "hard-nosed" enough to follow good rational planning procedures. PPBS has been criticized as a planning procedure in education for some of the same reasons.[28]

Schaffer argues that the purpose of any planning process is to help management gain control over the direction of the organization in a way that is beneficial to everyone. To do this, it is necessary to involve individuals throughout the organization in the planning in order to help them learn to work in new ways. It is also necessary to gain consensus about new directions, and commitment to taking steps toward moving in those directions.

Such planning is a slow, deliberate, people-centered process. Schaffer's prescription for success in planning is as follows: At the heart of the developmental approach to planning are two strategic principles:

1. The first planning projects should be focused on goals that are urgent but achievable, so that success can be realized in a relatively short time. It should be possible to get the "feel" of a complete planning process within a matter of weeks or months.
2. Initial projects should be designed and carried out in ways that help managers to develop new competence and confidence in using planning tools and procedures.

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28. Rojcic, John M., "The Impact of PPBS on Educational Decision-Making." Thrust, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 1976. (Official publication of the Association of California School Administrators.)

If planning is conceived as a developmental process involving lots of people, and if it is carefully structured it can be a valuable tool by which a school or district can "get a handle" on its own future and control its own processes in new ways, to the benefit of administrators, students, teachers, and parents. It is not easy to achieve this. Schaffer's advice will help.

3. Some activities that sound like planning and may be part of a planning process, but should not be confused with planning.

The focus of this Handbook is on a planning process which brings people together from different positions within the school or the school system to do planning. They are brought together in a group or groups which are capable of carrying through a complete planning process.

This focus excludes from detailed discussion a variety of methods and procedures which are useful under certain conditions. Some of these may be utilized along the way as one component in a complete planning process. These include the following:

Goal-setting exercises. Goal-setting can be done by methods which involve large numbers of people in surfacing educational values and pointing toward directions for planning to take. Valuable information about educational priorities and community perceptions of the school system may be obtained. These exercises may produce a sense of participation in schools by some members of the community.

A goal-setting exercise alone is not a planning process. Some, such as one-shot surveys, do not afford the opportunity for interaction among persons involved, including educators. In that case, people may state preferences and values which they would change if presented with alternative points of view in a different kind of process. Goal-setting may not even result in a healthy sense of participation in the community. A recent statewide program in a local school district goal-setting in California was evaluated by an outside contractor. One of the conclusions of the evaluation was as follows:

> Participants felt that while they might know how to set goals according to a particular procedure, they were unsure as to why goal-setting was occurring, or the place of goal-setting activities in the functioning of the district.[29]

An example of a participatory goal-setting process that has been used with apparent success in many school districts is the Fresno Plan.[30]

Large group planning workshops. Large group planning workshops have been conducted under many conditions and circumstances in schools and elsewhere. For a good description of a planning workshop for a community, see Schindler-Rainman.[31]

One well-known form of the large group planning workshop is the "charette". Thiemann defines the charette as "a group activity drawing upon the creativity of a heterogeneous population to generate ideas, regardless of practicality, in order to solve a specific problem.[32] Charettes have been widely used to draw together a very large number of persons from educational organizations and communities for intensive short-term interaction on rather specific problems. The goal is to reach some consensus about general directions for the future. Charettes do not constitute planning but may be very useful as part of a planning process. A helpful description of the charette is available in Napier and Gershenfeld.[33]

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29. Urban and Rural Systems Associates, "Community Involvement in Goal-Setting: An In-Depth Study of Selected California School Districts," San Francisco, 1975.

30. A detailed booklet on the Fresno Plan is available from Fresno County (California) Dept. of Education, 2314 Mariposa St., Fresno, Ca. 93721. The booklet is entitled School and Community: Partners in Education.

31. Schindler-Rainman, Eva, "Community Development through Laboratory Methods", in Keith D. Benne, L.P. Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, and R.O. Lippitt, The Laboratory Method of Changing and Learning, Palo Alto (Calif.): Science and Behavior Books, 1975.

32. Thiemann, Francis C., Ariole, A Planning Guide, Eugene, Oregon, Center for Educational Policy and Management, 1973.

33. Napier, Rodney, and Matti Gershenfeld, Groups: Theory and Experience. Palo Alto, Houghton Mifflin, 1975.

Large workshops have numerous possible benefits and numerous possible difficulties. The potential benefits, in addition to large-scale involvement and commitment to solutions, include the discovery of valuable solutions and resources from throughout the community, and the shortness of time involved. While charettes may be very time-consuming during the preparation period, the workshop itself is usually designed to last only a few days at most. Most participatory planning activities extend over many weeks and months.

Potential difficulties include conflict between contending sides which emerges during the workshop itself. It is of critical importance that the facilitator of a charette or similar workshop be able to maximize a climate of interdependence and collaboration among the participants, to build up a feeling of mutual power and influence, rather than of contending powers. The facilitator must be able to develop a climate of responsiveness to the needs and positions of individuals and groups of participants. In other words, running a large-scale planning workshop is not easy. Under the right circumstances, however, such a workshop can be very useful.

Techniques without meetings.

Not all methods for involving people in planning require face-to-face meetings of the participants. A survey with feedback is one example. Interviews may be conducted which are summarized and reported back to the persons interviewed, with opportunity for further comment.

The well-known Delphi technique is a form of survey with feedback, used for specific groups of people for specific purposes. Delphi is described as a method of obtaining the collective judgment of a group of experts about the most likely future state of affairs. The procedure calls for requesting written responses from a carefully-chosen group of experts. Their replies are summarized, and the summaries are sent back to the experts, who can then modify their positions on the basis of what others have said. A description of the Delphi method is available in Thiemann (op. cit.) A Delphi process

or something similar, may be useful as part of a community-wide educational planning process.

These and similar methods will not be discussed further in this Handbook but educational planners should know that they are available in tested form.

4. The Place of Special Planning Groups in Schools or School Systems

Special planning groups are no novelty. They have been used successfully at the highest levels of government. One of the most famous examples is the special group used by President Kennedy to deal with the Cuban missile crisis in 1963. The workings of this group were described by Robert Kennedy as follows:

> During all these deliberations, we all spoke as equals. There was no rank and, in fact, we did not even have a chairman...As a result, the conversation was completely uninhibited and unrestricted. It was a tremendously advantageous procedure that does not frequently occur within the Executive Branch of the government, where rank is so often important. (Napier and Gershenson, op. cit., p. 111)

This quotation illustrates some important features of special planning groups. The group described did not replace the regular structure of government; it was set up for specific purposes. For these purposes, however, it was considered more effective than the regular bureaucratic structures. The flow of conversation was not inhibited by rank and position. Specialists were called in whenever necessary. Within the special planning group, all normal roles were suspended and the focus was entirely upon finding the best solutions to the problems at hand.

The term "temporary system" has been used extensively to describe such special groups. The term refers to any administrative set-up, such as a participatory planning system, which is designed for certain limited purposes and works within its own time frame. Temporary systems

bring people together into roles which are different from those of their everyday working lives. Common examples of temporary systems are conferences, games, task forces, and holiday celebrations. In schools, temporary systems may be assembled for purposes of education, re-education, consultation, research, pleasure, or to engage in planning. A "collateral organization" is a special form of temporary system.

A basic assumption in participatory planning is that the organizational structure that works well for routine administration may not be suitable for needed planning and problem-solving. A new temporary or collateral system may be required.

If you intend to develop a special planning group, you should be familiar with the concepts of temporary systems and collateral organizations, and comfortable with the principles of changed roles and special groupings of people that are implied by these terms. A participatory planning group is a special or temporary system.

In some cases, the line between permanent committees and temporary planning groups may be obscured. Sometimes advisory committees are not "temporary". Some advisory committees have planning responsibilities, particularly in California schools. When this occurs, the planning functions and ongoing advisory functions should be separated. This can be done even when the same people are doing both. The planning function should be retained as a temporary, task-oriented function, with its own deadlines and roles for participants.

5. Two Simultaneous Processes in Planning

Two distinct processes go on at the same time in participatory planning. One is a technical planning process; the other is an organizational change process. Two separate sets of skills are needed: planning skills and people skills. Sometimes handbooks on planning concentrate on the technology of planning as though it were a machine-like function, rather than a human development process.

The relative importance of these two processes will depend somewhat on the particular local situation and the problems or topics that are taken up for planning. For example, if a participatory process is to be used to plan a new building, the people side will be important, but not as complex as it would be in the case of planning which calls for changes in the role of classroom teachers. New roles for classroom teachers appear, for example, when plans call for using more classroom volunteers or a teacher advisory system to supplement the counseling program.

In all cases of participatory planning, however, both people processes and planning processes are present and important.

Administrators setting out to conduct a participatory planning process need both people skills and planning skills. These may be learned or hired by means of consultants, but both are crucial. The planning skills are generally familiar to any experienced administrator, except that participatory planning has some features unlike other forms of planning.

The second set of skills - skills in working with people in change and development processes - are more subtle.

There is danger in believing that there are no special organizational change skills, apart from general administrative skills. This is untrue. Change processes are different from routine administrative work. Planning and change within schools sets up complex human interactions which affect the familiar relationships in schools. Special methods and insights are needed. Consultants can be extremely helpful. National networks of persons trained professionally in organizational change and development are a source of skilled consultation.[34] Special training is available through workshops sponsored by colleges and private organizations.

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34. Among the best-known networks and organizations of persons skilled in organizational change are: The NTL Institute, P.O. Box 9155, Rosslyn Station, Arlington, Va. 22209; University Associates, 7596 Eads Ave., La Jolla, Calif. 92037; The O.D. Network, 1011 Park Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey 07060.

6. When is a School or District Ready for Participatory Planning?

Nobody is ever ready, of course. As with other things we do, we simply plunge in and learn as we go. However, certain preliminary "readiness" considerations may be helpful.

Ideally, the level of trust within a school or system should be high. The best time to engage in planning is not when conflict is raging, nor when mutual suspicions abound between and among parents, teachers, and administrators. On the other hand, a successful planning process can help build a higher level of trust. If there is reason to believe that the level of trust is very low between groups, some preliminary trust-building procedures might be advisable before starting the actual work of planning.

Trust in this case includes the belief that a variety of people can make a contribution to planning. Participatory planning starts with the assumption that, given a good structure for planning and skillful management of the process, teachers, administrators, parents, and students can accomplish planning successfully; and that any school or system has adequate numbers of persons from all these groups who can and will participate successfully in planning.[35] Experience around the country has proven that this is the case.

Participatory planning should not be undertaken unless adequate staff time can be given to it. Further discussion of the role of staff is included in the next chapter of this Handbook.

Participatory planning is a mutual learning process. The climate of the school or system should be such that everyone will accept the fact that we all have much to learn, whether as parents, teachers, students, or administrators.

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35. For a good discussion of a variety of participatory practices and experiences in inner-city programs, see Citizen Participation in Urban Development (3 volumes), edited by Hans Spiegel. Washington, NTL Institute, 1968.

Planning requires that there be tolerance of error. Much of what we do necessarily has a trial-and-error quality about it. People differ in the degree to which they can tolerate ambiguity and error. It is important to establish, even before engaging in planning, that some trial and error is going to be necessary.[36] The climate for this can be developed by discussion of the pitfalls and possibilities of a planning process with all interested groups before beginning the work.

Participatory planning is not administrative decentralization. Nevertheless, the planning process must be accepted as an integral part of the school's or district's decision-making process. The planners will need to know that their work is seen in this light.

Value questions cannot be avoided in participatory planning. Basic value positions and possible conflicts should be thought through in advance, and possible methods for dealing with them should be considered before getting started.

Finally, as stated before, participatory planning implies organizational change. The climate of accepting the need for change must be established in advance. This can be done by discussions of issues and problems which may become the subject for planning, before the process gets under way. If there is no acceptance of the need for change, participatory planning can only be seen as a threat to the established order, and therefore rejected.

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36. For a valuable discussion of this point, see Michael, Donald, On Learning to Plan - and Planning to Learn, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

SECTION B - First Steps in Structuring Your Participatory Planning System: Some Key Questions

As the first step in structuring a system for participatory planning, the answers to three questions will be helpful:

1. What depth of planning is appropriate for your purposes?
2. What is the appropriate scope of the work?
3. What type of output do you desire from your planning group(s)?

1. The depth of planning.

A planning process can be designed to deal with the most fundamental issues, or it can be designed to deal with issues which do not cut so deeply into basic institutional purposes.

The deepest level may be called institutional-level planning. An example is the process by which the National Park Service is planning the future of Yosemite National Park. Questions basic to the management of the Park are under study: should the Park make provision for as many visitors as wish to come, or should accommodations be limited? Should the use of automobiles be curtailed? Should conventions be encouraged? In other words, what is the basic mission of the Park - to maintain the natural surroundings or to provide recreational facilities for the largest possible number of people?

Such basic issues abound in schools these days. Some of them could be taken up in a participatory planning process in your community. For example, consider the issue of "alternative" elementary schools. Some argue that school systems should provide all children with a "common" experience, and should not set out to offer different experiences in "3-R schools", "open classroom schools", and the like.

Should educational diversity be permitted and encouraged in response to differing inclinations on the part of students and differing demands on the part of parents? This is an issue at the deepest institutional level.

The establishment of minimum competencies required for high school graduation is another fundamental issue. Significant changes in high

school graduation requirements is a closely-related one. What are the basic responsibilities of high schools? If more and more students are engaged in off-campus learning experiences, the schools have less and less control over the activities of students. Do our schools have custodial responsibility for the behavior of all students who are enrolled, during stipulated hours of the day? Or will the "custodial" role of the schools give way to other needs and pressures?

It is not difficult to find such deep institutional issues. It is difficult to work on them fruitfully. Nevertheless, it can be done, and increasingly will be done. Harold Santee, superintendent of the Palo Alto schools, indicated the need for institutional-level planning when he launched Project Redesign in 1972. In one of his speeches, he said:

> "A system of education based upon agrarian and industrial needs, faced with the technological-electronic world of today, is outmoded. Our youth do not live in the agrarian industrial society we were privileged to enjoy. They live in a world with an uncertain future, in an overpopulated, problem-ridden world they had no part in creating but which they will soon inherit---the Palo Alto community must now, together, review its entire educational system." [37]

Institutional-level planning is much more than the projection of trends and much more than the analysis of needs through discrepancy analysis. It is a highly creative activity. Many believe that the practice of institutional-level planning, with its attendant skills, will become more common and more necessary in the near future.[38] The State of California is engaged in this level of planning on a statewide basis, through the work of

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37. Santee, Harold, "Education in the Seventies: A Superintendent's Perspective." Education for the People, Vol. II, California State Legislature, 1972.

38. For a discussion of institutional changes in education which may involve planning at the local level, see Harman, Willis, "The Societal Context of U.S. Public Education in the Next Quarter-Century." Educational Planning, Vol. 2, No. 3, January 1976.

the State Department of Education's RISE program (Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education).[39]

The problem-solving level. Planning at the level of problem-solving is an effort to resolve a specific problem or set of problems, as the name implies. Examples are the use of participatory planning to design a new school or to close old ones. Continuing problems of attendance or vandalism would be other examples, as would persistent complaints about the secondary English program from parents and students.

Institutional-level planning may be avoided by simply not doing it. Problem-level planning is usually not avoidable. The issue is whether to utilize participatory processes or to do the planning through "regular" administrative procedures and channels. Planning at the problem-solving level is usually more tightly focused, with more clear-cut issues and greater clarity about the best candidates for participation in the process. Otherwise, the procedures will be very similar.

Planning at the daily work level. In a growing number of schools, participatory planning is utilized for school-level planning, including the development of objectives and methods for meeting the objectives, within classrooms and schools. The Early Childhood Education program in California requires such a participatory process. Such planning is broad in scope, usually covering nearly all aspects of school life. The groups assembled for planning may become permanent features of school life, at times acting in a planning capacity, and at other times serving as an advisory committee. Many of the processes to be discussed in the next chapter, "Organizing and Managing a Participatory Planning Process", will apply to

39. See the Report on the California Commission for Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education, California State Department of Education, 1975. See also Senate Bill 1737, California Legislature, 1976.

this type of planning. The format for planning in the California case is provided by the state. Some elements deal with organizational change processes, and some with routine management processes. This combined role generates certain problems which are best solved by separating the planning and the advisory functions according to the rhythm of needed change in the school and the rhythm of the planning year. For example, during the initial year, the planning function may predominate. For the next couple of years, the emphasis may be on the advisory role. At a later time, a more intensive planning year may once again be appropriate.

2. The Scope of Work

"Scope" refers to the range of issues intended to be taken up within a participatory planning process. Managing a participatory planning process calls for some decisions about the intended scope in order to keep the work within the intended bounds. Some choices are as follows:

1. The scope of work is limited and designated.
2. The scope of work is open.
3. The scope of work is comprehensive and open.

The planning process may be limited to one problem or topic which is designated in advance. It is usually spelled out in a "charge" or "charter" given to the planning group.

An alternative is to start with an open scope and let a closer definition of the scope emerge from the process. Project Redesign in Palo Alto was set up with an open scope. The planners were charged to conduct a general examination of the system and make proposals for change.

Beginning a process with an open scope is not as risky as it sounds, providing ground rules for planning are clearly spelled out. A participatory planning group cannot turn into a special interest group or a vendetta if planning norms have been established and enforced. (See the next chapter for a discussion of norms.) An open scope does present the participants with the very difficult problem of focusing the work.

A reason for utilizing an open scope is to permit ideas and areas of interest to emerge which otherwise would not surface. Participants will often work very hard doing highly constructive and creative work in areas they themselves have chosen.

To specify that the scope should be "comprehensive" adds another dimension to the planning process. School systems are enormously complex organizations, despite their surface simplicity. No plan can cover everything.

The term "comprehensive" has a meaning other than that of including all elements of the system within the plan. It may also refer to the integrity of the parts. If a plan is to deal with more than one topic or problem, the eventual plans and proposals will need to fit together in an integrated whole that is not self-contradictory.

3. The type of output desired.

It is important for the managers of the participatory planning effort, as well as for the participants, to know clearly what output is expected of them, what form it should take, and how it will be used.

In every case, the output of participatory planning must directly affect the school or school system.

This must be intended from the start and the output must be shaped along the way so that it is directly usable by the system. Output that is too abstract or too general to matter in practice is not acceptable. The output of the planners may be rejected through some decision-making process and never implemented, but it should be in such form that it can be officially adopted without extensive reworking and, if adopted, will directly affect people's behavior in the school or system.

The issue of type of output is a different issue than the depth of planning. Types of output are as follows:

1. Institutional goals
2. Operational or planning goals
3. Operational goals with plans for implementation

An institutional goal provides a major policy direction for the school or system. For example, such a goal might state that alternative forms of elementary education are to be made available according to the demand from parents. Another institutional goal might state that opportunities will be developed for students to receive credit for learning in off-campus settings, such as in private lessons or job experience, or attendance at a local college.

With declining enrollment and shrinking budgets, institutional goals for reducing services are necessary, and these may also be developed using participatory methods. The educational consequences of alternative cuts in programs and services can be studied within a participatory program, with the result stated in the form of institutional goals.

Institutional goals differ sharply from general educational goals found in official school district policy manuals or other official documents. Such general educational goals are essentially statements of ideals. Institutional goals are not statements of ideals, but statements of intended actions.

Operational or planning goals differ from institutional goals in calling for more specific behavior on the part of specified individuals or groups, within a more specific time frame, and with more detailed estimates of anticipated costs or savings.[40]

The development of operational or planning goals calls for intensive involvement of other persons who will be affected directly by implementation of the goals. Institutional goals set specific directions with proposed actions, but they leave much work to be done in developing specifics, which can be accomplished by designated individuals or by a further participatory process.

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40. A useful reference which discusses extensively the concept of operational goals is Hardy, James M., Corporate Planning for Nonprofit Organizations. New York: Association Press, 1972.

Operational goals are the result of already having carried that process forward. More decisions have been tentatively made. The consequences for individuals and for the program and budget have been carried out in greater detail.

The principal, superintendent, or whoever is responsible for the participatory planning process must specify to the planners exactly what is expected of them. Are they responsible for goals at the institutional level or are they charged with operational goals which will contain many more specifics? Each planning situation is different, and the needs of each situation will determine the appropriate output. It is vital, however, that everyone knows in advance what output is expected, and that this output will figure prominently in setting the course of the school or district. Participatory planning exercises which result only in studies which no one reads, or in "goals" which are really abstract ideals, or in "plans" which affect no one's job or behavior, are not recommended.

A third level of specificity of planning output occurs when the detailed plans for implementation accompany the operational goals. When such detailed implementation plans are developed, it is vital that those who will conduct the implementation have played a major role in developing the plans. Unless this happens, two separate difficulties may arise. The first is lack of commitment. The second, equally damaging, is lack of clarity and understanding. The literature on innovations and changes in schools contains many examples of situations in which school staffs were committed to a course of action, but discovered after an initial period of trial and error that they had never understood the intended change, often because they had not shared in the formulation of the plans.[41]

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41. An interesting example is Gross, Neal; Joseph Giacquinta, and Marilyn Bernstein, Implementing Organizational Innovations. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

SECTION C - Stages You May Expect to Pass Through: The Planning Process and the Group Process

A participatory planning process will move through definable stages, as with any planning process. These are logical steps from initial ideas to completed proposals. Each step will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The stages may be identified as follows:

1. Problem definition and renegotiation
2. Initial problem analysis
3. Information gathering
4. Development of tentative proposals
5. Checking the tentative proposals with a broader audience
6. Development of final proposals

These stages will all be necessary. They will not necessarily follow in a neat sequence. There will be overlapping and some of the stages will be repeated as the issues are clarified or redefined.

In other words, participatory planning is not a simple linear process. The issues will come in and out of focus. There will be feedback loops. Each time this happens, however, progress will have been made.

The fact that participatory planning is "messy" is disturbing to persons used to a very clean planning process conducted by only professional planners. The reason for the "messiness" is that participatory planning is part of an over-all process of policy formation and decision-making. Recent studies of decision-making in schools have presented ample evidence of a fact that school administrators have known all along: the decision process is always "messy", compared to clear-cut, idealized, "normative" decision-making models. The process is closely related to the product, and the process is extremely important. It is a means for educating ourselves and the school and community. It is a means for expressing the values of the system, or for developing values more appropriate to changing

times. It is a creative process, not simply an analytical one. It is also pleasurable.

Participatory planning may be compared to a social research process, which is also inevitably "messy". As the work goes along, new insights are produced which require rethinking and modification of original ideas.

The messiness of the planning process is compounded by the messiness of the accompanying people or group process. Inevitably, participatory planning calls for the creation of groups of participants, and these groups have a life of their own. As with all groupings of people, they move through stages of group development. All this is quite separate from the technical planning activities, but quite unavoidable and important to understand.

The stages of group development have been thoroughly researched and should be understood by managers of participatory planners. Various authors describe these stages differently. Napier and Gershenfeld describe five stages:[42]

> Beginning. The first stage is a time of testing and first impressions. The environment is based more on suspicion than on trust. The level of discomfort may be high. There is hope, but also trepidation. Members are concerned about their own needs being met by the group. There is pressure for order and structure.
>
> Movement toward Confrontation. Individuals have the desire to be liked and accepted by those with power. Leaders may be criticized. Ideas may become polarized. Alliances may be drawn up. Some attention is given to facts or data, but there is concern about personal influence and prestige. Personality issues may overshadow task issues.

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42. These are condensed from Napier and Gershenfeld's chapter on the evolution of working groups. Detailed study of this chapter will be useful to all group leaders.

Compromise and Harmony. Self-destructive tendencies that have developed have become apparent. Means may be sought to work together effectively. The group may become inefficient and suffer morale problems because it has attempted to create interpersonal harmony at the expense of achievement.

Reassessment: Union of Emotional and Task Components. A choice must be made between greater control in order to achieve the objectives of the group as rapidly as possible, or following a slower course of delving more deeply into interpersonal problems. These may include roles of members, decision-making procedures, and problems of leadership and communication. There may be intense conflict. This is not necessarily incompatible with progress.

Resolution and Recycling. The group reaches maturity. At this stage, it should be able to resolve conflicts more effectively.

Group life in participatory planning should not be taken for granted. Group process problems may well be much more difficult to solve than problems relating to the more technical work of planning. Groups can become completely immobilized at certain stages of development. In such a case, the group must be disbanded, or enter a period of intense examination of the reasons it cannot work well together. A skilled group consultant may be needed to help a group find the reasons for its failure and move forward. Faulty group processes have consequences similar to poor human processes in classrooms: disaffected members, unpleasant behavior, and opposition to the entire participatory process.

Group failure is not necessary, any more than poor relationships in classrooms are necessary. What is required is thoughtful structuring of the process before it begins, awareness of the types of problems that may be expected, and the ability to deal with them when they arise.

Full group development, when it is successful, should result in the full utilization of the human resources available to the group. It should

produce considerable satisfaction among group members. They will have accomplished two tasks: a planning task, and the task of becoming a working team. It will have been their own work, for which they can take credit. Frequently, when a group has reached the point of being a good working team, members will enjoy each other's company to the extent of holding social events apart from the work of the group.

At the heart of any participatory planning process will be some form of central committee or team, with additional committees for more specific purposes. Functions of such groups will be discussed in the next chapter.

Groups differ in the degree to which they become cohesive, unified working units which produce good results. It is useful to consider other working groups within your school or system in the context of how a planning group may differ from some of them.

School systems have many working groups within the over-all organizational picture. Some examples are curriculum committees, principals' groups, faculty groups, and a range of advisory committees. Many of the expectations people may have for the planning group will be formed out of experiences with these other groups. This may be a disadvantage. School committees are often ineffective. Five reasons for this are suggested by Napier and Gershenfeld:

1. Decision-making procedures are usually imposed and based on tradition, rather than what is most useful.
2. People are often appointed to committees, and even if they volunteer, they are there for a variety of reasons (from interest in meeting important people to helping out a friend who is chairman).
3. Often committees lack the power to implement the decisions they make, and thus feel their own impotence.
4. Committees seldom see processing their own interpersonal behavior as part of the job, especially if the group meets only once every three or four weeks.
5. The committee is not necessarily composed of the people best equipped to discuss the issues confronting the group.

School committees have a truncated group life. They often do not pass through the stages which characterize fully-developed working units. There are many reasons for this. Groups may not meet often. Their responsibilities may not be well defined nor may these responsibilities require close interaction and joint effort. It may not be desirable in the context of the school or the system for a particular group to develop much of a life of its own.

On the other hand, the matter may not have been given much thought. Many school groups might be much more satisfactory to everyone if more attention were paid to the process of group development. A successful participatory planning group is responsible for a complex task requiring close interaction and mutual support. Full group development in this case is very important.

A lengthy quotation from Napier and Gershenfeld illuminates some important matters relating to service on groups and committees in schools.

> Most people have never experienced true participative decision-making within the kind of problem-solving climate described above. It is a relatively rare and difficult process because those with successful previous experience are usually in the minority in a work group. Most of us are used to strong leaders who control rewards, establish the ground rules of the particular task, and provide the necessary push to get the job done. We expect to be directed, motivated, intellectual, impersonal, and rational in our approach to problem-solving. As a result, we tend to see ourselves as separate from the group, often competing with other members for recognition and responding to authority rather than to member peers. Such a climate is not conducive to establishing free and open communication, role flexibility, and a truly non-evaluative atmosphere. It is this kind of atmosphere that helps to predetermine the kind of development possible for a group. We are used to being dependent and, even though we do not like it, will often demand behaviors from those in control which insure its presence. Even when a work group is responsive to democratic principles, members often become the victims of the majority vote, the conflict-reducing option which, if used indiscriminately, may polarize a group and erase the vital thread of compromise upon which the effective decision-making group must be based.

> If a group has never had experience outside the confines of a rigid time schedule, agenda, and parliamentary procedure, it is doubtful that it will ever develop the trust necessary for processing its own behaviors or for the interdependence necessary to see issues as other than politically expedient and strategic. Certainly decisions will be made and groups will function, sometimes in an extraordinarily efficient manner. The price paid, however, will be in terms of participant involvement, interest, cooperation, and member accountability. The group, like a growing child, responds best to patience, freedom within limits, concern from others, and a climate that encourages spontaneity and authenticity. It is a non-quantifiable mixture that varies from group to group, with intangibles often determining the difference between success and failure. Yet, more and more success can be assured if the leader-facilitator is able to formulate the necessary questions to help him understand the group with which he is to work. This, added to a familiarity with diagnostic techniques and a few basic approaches to working with the task and emotional problems that inevitably face any working group, is essential. Much more than the use of gimmicks and techniques, success seems geared to how effectively the group is able to respond to its very human needs in a manner that exploits no one and maximizes its own potential. [43]

Full group development is only possible with a relatively small group of people working together quite intensively for an extended period of time. A successful teacher team may exhibit the qualities of full group development, as may other groups around the school system.

What if you do not have the time to work toward full group development in a planning group?

Under conditions of extreme time pressures, one alternative is to use a very closely-imposed structure. Each meeting of the group might be structured by the leader to achieve very specific purposes. For example, one session might be devoted to brainstorming ideas, another to analysis of data, another to review of proposals. Group development issues and

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43. From GROUPS: THEORY AND EXPERIENCE, by R.W. Napier and M.K. Gershenfeld, copyright 1973 by Houghton Mifflin Co. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

interpersonal issues might be kept to a minimum, while involving the members as individuals, but not as a group. Individual responsibility would be stressed, not group responsibility. Over-all responsibility for the process and the product will not rest with the group as a corporate body, but with the leader or consultant who directs the process. Intensive work outside the group, between meetings, will be necessary. The group will function similarly to a class of students in a high school, in that it will not be expected to have a group life of its own.

The price that is paid, of course, is a much different type of commitment and ownership of both the process and the product. Such a closely-imposed structure may also be appropriate when working with a large group. Fuller group development, with a sense of teamwork and ownership in the task, is much preferable to a tightly-controlled process, whenever time and resources permit.

Close control is not the same as good structure. A process should always be well-structured. Good structure, far from being in opposition to the development of teamwork, will greatly help to achieve it.

In many situations in which participatory planning is used, closely-controlled methods are not usable for the reason that the planners have obligations to a broader constituency of students, teachers, or parents, and cannot carry out such obligations without the freedom to serve as full members of a working team.

The Roles People Play

All of us are capable of playing many different roles successfully Like actors on the stage, we are not condemned to forever play Hamlet, or worse, a bit part.

In participatory planning, choices about roles may be made either deliberately or by default. One choice is that individuals will play the same basic role they always play in the organization. Parents will always speak for parents, act like parents, attempt to express the parental point of view,

whatever that may be. Teachers will be teachers, and will stress the professional knowledge and expertise of teachers. It will be assumed that an administrator will continue to wear his administrative hat in the group.

An alternative is to take special pains to drop those customary roles while in a planning group. This does not mean leaving behind the expertise you possess, because the group will need that. It means leaving behind the expectations of deference paid to administrators, or patronizing attitudes sometimes directed toward students, and other "normal" expectations. If this can work at the highest levels of the federal government, it can also work within a school or school district.

Everyone may take on a new role, the role of planner. No one comes as an expert in this role. Everyone will have some learning to do. The roles within the group will not necessarily match roles and responsibilities outside the group at all. This is not abdication of leadership on the part of the principal or the superintendent or others. Just as we can wear a different hat while in the group, we can quickly assume our old hat outside the group. The principal may take part as a participant rather than as leader, while continuing to have over-all responsibility for the success of the school and of the planning project - responsibility which everyone recognizes and appreciates.

The establishment of roles within planning groups will be discussed in the next chapter under the topic of "norms".

SECTION D - Relationships with the Board of Education or with Other Decision-Making Bodies

In most situations, plans developed by means of a participatory process must be approved by the board of education or by others in positions of higher authority.

Probably the worst procedure possible is for plans and proposals to be taken before a board of education completely cold, in the form of a report about which they have little prior knowledge. No doubt everyone who works with official boards knows that. However, even repeated attempts to keep boards informed can have disappointing results. Interim reports may be received with polite interest, or even impolite interest, but may produce little real knowledge of what is going on. Boards often do not have detailed knowledge of matters inside the school system. For many purposes, it is not essential that they do. In the case of participatory planning, however, the final outcome of the effort may well hinge upon the board, and their relationship with the planning process can be extremely important.

Figure 3 illustrates one approach to the problem of informing and involving the board (or other key decision-makers) during the planning process.

Figure 3[43]

Who is Involved \ What is Involved	Operational Issues (budgets, personnel matters, routine problems)	Broader Educational Issues (ideas, underlying assumptions, goals)
Persons with Operational Authority	A	B
Persons who do not have operational authority	D	C

43. I am indebted to James Shultz for suggesting this figure.

Board members and top administrators routinely deal with operational issues and have authority to do so. This combination appears in Square A.

In participatory planning, persons without formal operational authority become involved in some operational issues. This is one of the purposes for establishing a participatory process - to gain the assistance of persons who lack operational authority but whose assistance is desired. It was for this purpose that President Kennedy utilized a team of participants in making decisions during the Cuban missile crisis, in the example cited. This is illustrated by Square D in the figure.

These participants also typically deal with broader educational issues. The participatory planning process sets up the means for looking at underlying assumptions which we may no longer accept, and new ideas which deserve consideration. This activity appears in Square C.

Often, Square B is the missing link. In this square, persons with operational authority deal with broader educational issues. Boards of education typically do little of this, under the pressure of routine business. Yet some of this can be stimulating and valuable to board members.

During participatory planning processes, board members should be invited to share at times in the "blue sky" work of considering the broader issues and new ideas, in the informal give-and-take of the participatory planning process. By this means, the board will get inside the planning process, and the planners will learn what they can expect as plans are formally presented to the board. What is proposed is not simply informing the board members, but involving them in the planning process itself at key points.

When plans reach the level of formal presentation, they may cause an overload on the decision-making capacity of the board. The first impulse is to delay the decision-making until a less crowded agenda appears. That can be a serious mistake. As the planning process takes shape, agreement

should be negotiated with the board to act promptly on the plans as presented, perhaps in special meetings.

Successful participatory planning never loses sight of the fact that those with operational authority make operational decisions.

In Conclusion: Some Over-All Principles

Participatory planning is a collaborative, integrative activity. The mechanism is completely different from adversary-style activities, such as collective bargaining, or any process model which pits one group or set of interests against another. This is not easy. This type of planning is not a wishy-washy affair. It demands structure and close attention, and the ability to solve problems when they arise.

We assume that ideas and solutions can be found which will be beneficial to many persons, and that they can be found effectively by wide-scale involvement which will also result in support for the schools and ownership of the new approaches by many persons.

This is not a top-down planning process. Administrators lead in participatory planning by setting up and facilitating a good process. You can specify in advance the boundaries of solutions which are acceptable. Proposals cannot be specified in advance, however, except as general directions or ideas which become the grist for planning. There must be plenty of room for grass-roots development of ideas and proposals. The administrative role is to see that the process works - resources are used, opinions are heard, data are analyzed, and the results are workable and acceptable. Nevertheless, the administrator's role is central. It cannot be delegated to subordinate staff in the school or district.

Kumove provides five guidelines for participatory planning.[44] These were not written specifically for schools, but for any public agency:

44. Kumove, Leon, "Participatory Planning," The Futurist, Vol. 9, No. 6, p. 318

1. The design is basic. Participation in planning is an organized activity designed as part of a public program.

2. The program is designed for participation by people who are likely to benefit or be affected by a decision to be made by public authority.

3. Participants must have a direct and well-defined role in influencing decision-making processes.

4. Participatory planning is interaction between the citizen participants, the public employees, and the experts, as a give-and-take process.

5. It is a method of achieving intelligent discussion of issues, resolution of differences and/or disagreement, based on rationality and principle with respect for differing opinions and without fear or suspicion.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZING AND MANAGING A PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS

A. The Center of Work: The Planning Team(s)

Participatory planning calls for intensive teamwork. Whether the group or groups that do the detailed work are called committees, councils, or teams, teamwork will be necessary.

This fact causes a dilemma that is a fundamental problem in participatory planning. Teamwork is possible only with relatively small groups. It is difficult to work intensively as a team with more than ten or twelve persons. In the Palo Alto project, planning teams of six to eight members proved very workable.

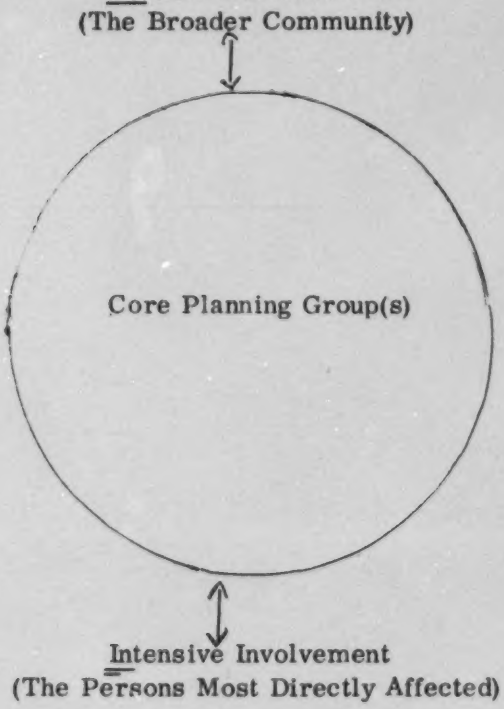
At the same time, it is necessary to involve many other persons in the process. More involvement is needed in two directions: more extensive involvement and more intensive involvement. More extensive involvement means reaching out to the broader community of parents, teachers, students, and citizens to seek information, opinions, and ideas relevant to the planning process. The broader community must have the opportunity to participate through information meetings, large planning workshops, hearings, surveys, or other workable techniques.

Experience has shown that people will not participate in these activities in large numbers unless the issues under discussion are quite controversial or have a clear and immediate impact on students. Nevertheless, the central planning group or groups in a participatory process must provide the opportunity for broader participation to demonstrate and develop broader understanding and support for the plans that eventually come forth. This broader interaction is not a passive receiving of "input"; it's an educational and developmental process, for the broader community and for the planners.

More intensive involvement means reaching deeply into the organization so that those whose personal and professional lives will be most directly

affected by the plans have an opportunity to share in shaping them. The amount of intensive involvement necessary depends on the subjects specified for planning, the level of planning, and the type of output intended. Issues which directly and immediately affect teachers will almost certainly require intensive involvement of many teachers who are not directly serving on planning teams. For example, the California statewide effort to improve secondary education (the RISE program) calls for greater "personalizing" of secondary education. This is expected to mean, among other things, the development of a new role for teachers in which each one serves as an advisor for a group of students. Successful implementation of such a change will almost certainly require considerable participation by most of the staff of the school considering the change. This participation serves three vital purposes: development of understanding of the proposed change, particularly changes that will be required in the daily working life of staff; discovery and utilization of the best ideas available for structuring and implementing the change; and development of support and acceptance of the change.

Figure 4



SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE DILEMMA

The dilemma is that participatory planning requires close interaction and teamwork on the part of a few people, with broader involvement in two directions. How can this be accomplished?

One solution is to make use of two separate types of organized groups in the planning process.

The first is a larger, broadly representative body responsible for general supervision of the planning process, and for extending participation in the more extensive direction. It will see that all of the necessary work is initiated either by individuals or by specialized planning teams. It will seek broad public input and discussion of the issues. It will work closely with the smaller, specialized planning teams, engaging in give-and-take on their work as it progresses.

The smaller, specialized groups or teams will do the detailed work of clarifying the problems, gathering and analyzing information, and drafting plans. These teams will be responsible for extending participation in the more intensive direction, seeking the close participation of those whose lives will be most closely affected by the proposed changes.

A larger advisory council or planning council can include as many people as necessary to secure representation from various groups and constituencies. The smaller planning teams can be structured for the most efficient performance of the planning task.

Depending upon the objectives of the planning project and the scope of the topics taken up for planning, the smaller planning team or teams can be made up of members of the larger council, or they can be different persons appointed by or with the approval of the larger council.

This distinction between the advisory or supervisory role of a larger group and the intensive work role of the smaller group(s) is made necessary by the fact that a large group cannot work effectively on detailed planning tasks, and by the need to reach out for greater involvement in the two directions we have discussed.

Of course, a small-scale participatory planning project dealing with limited subject matter may not require such an elaborate structure. In every situation, it is essential to think through the purposes of the participatory planning project and structure the working groups to fit that specific situation.

B. Recruiting participants for planning

Successful participatory planning will depend upon successful recruitment of participants. Time and thought given to recruitment will pay off. Two basic issues should be kept in mind:

1. The aim of recruitment is a successful planning process. Persons are being recruited for planning, not for other purposes.
2. Participation is caused. An active program is needed to seek out and engage people in the work of planning.

These remarks should not be interpreted to imply that the principal or planning project director, or any other person or group should closely control who participates. Depending on the structure of a particular planning project, some or all of the participants may be chosen by elections conducted among parents, teachers, or students. Others may volunteer for a variety of different roles, and these may well include unknown persons, as well as familiar faces, dissidents as well as supporters of the system or the administration.

At the same time, it would be foolish not to recognize that the efforts of the leaders in the planning project will heavily influence who participates. These efforts include advertising for volunteers and candidates in newspapers, meetings, and newsletters, as well as talking up the project with individuals and groups.

The first step in recruitment is to clarify what will be expected of participants: the amount of time that will be required, the types of activities involved, and the skills that will be needed collectively within the project.

Within the context of any participatory planning project, it is necessary to strike a balance between political considerations and technical considerations. It is necessary to seek out persons who are influential and respected within the school(s) and within the various parts of the community. It is accepted as a given that we need representation of differing points of view on education, a balance between the sexes, and representation of ethnic groups with significant numbers in the school and community. Technical considerations dictate seeking out persons who bring the necessary expertise to the planning process. This does not necessarily mean experience in planning, or even experience in education, nor formal training of any type. The expertise brought by some may be good insights into the feelings and attitudes of differing groups of people. Others will simply be able to think clearly about the problems at hand. Still others will possess specialized expertise, ranging from skill in conducting surveys to skill in working with groups, or skill in writing.

The ideal combination, from an organizational and technical point of view, will include three types of individual:

1. Persons with formal authority in the area in which problems are being considered. These may be teachers, department heads, principals, or other administrators.
2. Persons with particular skills and knowledge needed to work on the topics or problems proposed for the planning process.
3. Persons who are directly affected by solutions or proposals likely to come from the planning process.

Each of these needs further comment.

If persons with formal authority are not to participate directly in the planning, the process will remain outside the main administrative and decision structure of the school or system. Sometimes, depending upon the topic and circumstances, this may be desirable, but the consequences need careful consideration.

The involvement of people with formal authority in the same group with others who do not hold such positions is often a new experience, and requires careful structuring of expectations and ground rules. All of the participants, as planners, are given a certain legitimacy by their appointment or election to the planning council or teams. The purposes of the process are spelled out in advance. The planning project has a limited time frame: it is a temporary system. It does not replace the regular administration of the school. It is undertaken because the system needs the work and input of others besides those with the formal authority. When this is all spelled out, it should be possible for the persons with formal authority to work as team members with others without such authority. This may not happen without tensions and defensiveness, but these can be dealt with in a well-managed process.

Planning is an opportunity to engage some of the unused resources of the community and the school. Every community has trained and talented individuals who have not previously made a contribution to the schools. Many of them will serve if asked. Many school staffs include individuals with particular interests and training which are not fully utilized, or individuals with a desire to improve certain areas of knowledge or skills.

The involvement of persons who hold no official position but are simply going to be affected by proposed changes is, of course, based on the principle of participation by those who must live with the consequences of public policy formation. Their support is needed for effective implementation, and they will shed light on the situation that no one else can provide, in a well-run process. This goes for students, staff, and parents.

A specific finding from research is very relevant here. In participatory planning, the reason for using mixed groups does not stem merely from democratic ideals. In Project Redesign in Palo Alto, it was found that mixed groups consisting of teachers, parents, administrators, and students, were more effective as planning teams than groups made up entirely of parents or school staff members.

What Motivates People to Participate in Planning?

We assume that every participant is hoping to achieve some personal goals through participation, whether as administrators, students, parents, or teachers. This is not only expected, it is desirable. It is through discovering avenues of improvement by which everyone benefits that participatory planning succeeds.

In the Palo Alto project, the two most important motivations for people who initially agreed to participate, as stated in interviews and questionnaires, were "having a special interest in education", and "being asked to participate".

A desire to have more power in the system by participating in a decision-making process did not appear to be a major motivating factor. Dissatisfaction with the schools was also not a reason given by large numbers of people. The desire to help improve education was strong, but this did not stem from strong dissatisfaction with the present system. In the Palo Alto effort, anyone could volunteer to work in the project, so it is particularly interesting that few dissatisfied persons chose to participate. This may have been because of a generally positive attitude toward the schools in this particular community. However, there were those who were very unhappy with the schools. Participatory planning appears to be attractive to individuals who are generally supportive of schools and sympathetic to the problems of education, rather than to discontented individuals. The planning process itself might be a deterrent to discontented persons who do not like the careful consideration of alternatives required, but tend to have a particular solution firmly in mind before examining data.

The prospect of planning for the long-range future was not an attractive reason for participation in the Palo Alto project. Concern about the long-range future appears to be an abstract activity to many persons, and unrelated to current issues and problems, despite the fact that our view of the future controls much of what we do in the present.

The most common motivation was an interest in education, usually resulting from previous experience as a school employee or volunteer, and the prospect of taking part in the study of important educational issues. Equally important as a motivating factor was personal contact by someone in the school system asking the individual to participate.

Later in this chapter, we will discuss motivation for performance and persistence in the planning process after the decision is made to participate.

Broadening the Base of Participation - Drawing Participants from the Parent Community

The number of those willing to serve the schools in a demanding role, such as planning, is always small. In our complex, diverse society, people have many interests and only a small proportion have an interest in education strong enough to lead to intensive participation. Of these, not all are able to contribute the time required. Nevertheless, people can be found who will serve competently and enrich the system by their service, if there is a desire to seek them out. Interest can be developed, just as it can be in other civic activities. Participatory planning is a relatively new channel for participation which requires explanation before some will think of taking part.

Various findings from research and experience help to clarify the possibilities for broadening the base for participation. Opening up a new channel for participation will very likely produce some new participants who have not previously been involved. Planning as an activity has a special appeal to certain individuals. In Palo Alto, it appealed to a significant number of men who had otherwise not been involved in school work. Some types of participation have traditionally been left largely to women. Service in PTA offices and as classroom aides are examples. Some men find participation in planning attractive because it represents a change from their daily work life in useful community service, and requires them to use significant skills, whether technical or human, or simply knowledge of the community and a sense of the needs of students.

Various studies of educational politics suggest that participation is more open and widespread in the suburbs than in the cities, particularly in large urban centers. Some nationwide studies have given evidence that participation in education in general attracts only a few, even of those who are affected by the schools as parents, students, or taxpayers. One study concluded that schools have a "typically apathetic mass public with group expression of expectations heavily biased in favor of the status quo".[45]

These studies indicate only what has existed in the past, not what can exist or will exist in the future. They do make it clear that the development of participatory projects will require active recruitment to achieve the best possible combination of participants. It is not good enough to settle for the few who come knocking on our doors.

Both experience and research indicate that participants in school affairs tend to come from the middle ranges of income and status. The wealthiest and most influential individuals do not often serve on boards of education, much less in lesser capacities. School service is not highly regarded as a stepping stone for the politically and socially ambitious. Many persons, however, work in situations in which it is to their benefit to participate actively in community affairs. Civic organizations sometimes have committees to help people locate needed civic and volunteer tasks, or the officers or executive directors of such organizations are ready with names to suggest. Individuals and companies will often make people and facilities available to the school system to assist with a planning project, if asked.

People with very low incomes and/or low-prestige jobs are also more difficult to recruit than middle-income, middle-status people. Special effort is needed to seek out good possible participants and help them overcome reasons for non-participation. These reasons may be personal circumstances, such as child-care problems, or reasons of felt inadequacy when dealing with educators and other participants. Both kinds of reasons can be overcome.

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45. This quotation is from Harmon Zeigler, who has written extensively on political relationships between communities and schools. See especially Governing American Schools, by L. Harmon Zeigler, M. Kent Jennings, with G. Wayne Peak, North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1974.

Some evidence exists that volunteers in education tend to be persons with a slightly higher level of education than the community as a whole, whatever that level may be. This was true in the Palo Alto project. This does not necessarily mean that a higher level of education is desirable, but that more effort may be needed to seek out good potential participants from among persons with a lower level of education than the community average. Education is not so much a motivating factor for participation as it is a characteristic of that pool of individuals most likely to offer their services. There is a difference.

Within the group most likely to volunteer, even finer distinctions can be made on the basis of Palo Alto research evidence. Not surprisingly, people with prior experience in some form of service to schools are more likely to volunteer than persons without such experience. Women are more apt to volunteer than men. A family history of voluntary participation produces people who are more likely to volunteer. Membership in other civic and social organizations is associated with willingness to volunteer, as is the number of years of membership in educational organizations.

Persons who have a strong sense of personal control over their own lives are more apt to volunteer than persons who do not have that sense. Persons with time available are more likely to serve. Individuals who believe that parents should play a strong role in school affairs are more likely to volunteer than others, while those who stress the role of the board of education as the place where the people's voice is heard are less likely to be found among the participants.

In summary, persons most likely to volunteer their services, on the basis of study and experience in Palo Alto and elsewhere, are those with experience in educational and civic affairs; relatively high levels of education; a sense of personal control over their lives; a belief in the role of parents in school affairs; and a strong and stable interest in educational activities. They are not likely to be motivated by dissatisfaction with the schools, and they are likely to feel influential and competent in dealing with school people.

If we stop with this narrow base of volunteers, we will leave most of the community untapped. Clearly, a variety of methods are needed to broaden the base of participation to include others. The base can be built up over a period of years by gradually involving parents and others in more and more school activities. The history of the Early Childhood Education program in California proves this point, as one example among many.

At the same time, we should not look down our noses at the considerable resource available to the schools in that pool of persons most apt to volunteer. The educational climate of many a community might be turned for the better by a concerted effort on the part of the core of individuals most likely to devote themselves to the cause of education, if they can be recruited and provided with a structure within which to work, such as participatory planning.

A final note on motivation to participate: successful participation is pleasurable. It's pleasurable to be wanted. It's pleasurable to be in on important and interesting discussions. It's pleasurable to work successfully with a team of people. It's pleasurable to meet school officials and teachers. Don't underestimate the rewards of simple enjoyment of the process. This goes for all participants. Teachers enjoy working with other school people in new settings, and working in a different kind of relationship with administrators. Of course, the pleasure of the process depends upon how it is structured and the attitudes that people bring to it, particularly the leaders.

Opposition to participation may be expected. Some will feel that the educators are paid to run the schools and should not ask for participation from others. Some will feel that only certain "types" will serve in a volunteer capacity, and that these will not represent the community as a whole. Others will believe that people should be paid for their work and that doing significant work without pay is degrading or unfair.

In developing a group of volunteer planners, these objections should be taken into account, particularly in seeking as wide a base of people as possible. You can never achieve a genuine cross-section of the community

or the school system among participants in a planning project, at least not in any rigorous scientific sense. This, however, is not the primary purpose. The primary aim is to recruit persons who can make the best contribution to a planning process. City planning commissions, after all, may serve communities well without themselves being a cross-section of the community. One of the responsibilities of planners will be to seek the opinions and viewpoints of those who do not serve directly within the project, and to consider those viewpoints in developing plans and proposals. Persons who are not represented by volunteer planners are to be represented in this way, if the project is carried out in a conscientious manner.

Suspicion about wide involvement in planning does not exist only in schools. City and county planners have been under increasing pressure to develop participatory processes for those agencies, and objections arise there, as well. Nevertheless, city councils typically make use of planning commissions staffed with citizens, and often make good use of other citizen groups to help develop plans for projects and services.

Student Recruitment - Some Special Concerns

Student involvement in planning is not done to pay obeisance to democratic ideals nor to provide training in leadership, although these are important reasons. The principal reason is that students bring their own expertise, which is unlike that of any other group of participants. They sit, day by day, in school classrooms, seeing life from a vantage point different from that of everyone else.

Experience has demonstrated that students carry their own weight in planning. Many have leadership abilities and other abilities that are quite impressive. (We might remember that Victoria became Queen of England at eighteen. History records many similar young leaders.) Students can be enlisted who are capable of interacting as peers with teachers, parents, and administrators in planning projects. In Palo Alto's Project Redesign, the

coordinators of planning teams were generally very satisfied with the performance of students. Two out of seven felt that students didn't do their homework very well in preparation for meetings; five expressed great satisfaction with student participation.

Recruiting student participants takes special efforts. Students are passing through the school system and are often not interested in working on projects which may not come to fruition until after they have graduated. The experience of working with adults in projects of this kind can be a valuable experience, however, and a source of recommendations for college admission and employment. Opportunities can be given to earn academic credit for participation in planning. The learning of several specific skills is involved.

Students who do participate are not necessarily admired for this by other students. Working in a team with teachers and parents may be seen by some as an activity for "squares" or as collaboration with the enemy. Sensitivity to the realities of student culture is always necessary. Even more importantly, students may discover a patronizing attitude on the part of parents and teachers within the planning project. In Palo Alto, some students felt that different standards were applied to them than to others. Some sensed a paternalistic attitude. One said, "The rest of the group felt relieved every time I said something." Another said, "I was treated as an equal except when I did something right. I got special praise for being a student."

Students in Palo Alto especially disliked the expectation that students were there to represent the "student viewpoint", instead of simply being equal members of a planning team. They felt, quite rightly, that they were no more qualified to speak for all students than any parent is qualified to speak for all parents. Adults tended, in the students' view, to lump all students together in a special category.

A second source of students' annoyance was the use of "educational jargon". One student said he didn't realize how caught up he had become in special educational language until he wrote an article for the student paper which was rejected by the editor for being too full of jargon.

Students mentioned several personal benefits they felt from participation. The most frequently mentioned benefit was learning to work in small teams, interacting in an intensive group situation, practicing skills of listening and evaluating. Some mentioned that they learned a great deal about education which they thought to be useful. Others said that they appreciated learning about organizational decision-making processes, as a result of which they had grown less critical of administrators.

Teacher Participation - Some Special Concerns

Participatory planning in education can scarcely be imagined without the active participation of teachers. Experience has shown that such planning is very attractive to many teachers. It provides a method of job enrichment by affording the opportunity to visit other schools, read some literature, or meet with consultants. It provides access to persons around the district, including district administrators, through some new channels. It is a source of stimulation from looking at educational problems in new ways and considering possible new methods or roles. It may be a way to use some unusual skills. Teachers sometimes say they interact far too seldom with other educators in important educational matters. Interaction on educational issues with parents and students, if it is well-structured, is a source of professional satisfaction and stimulation. Not least, participation in planning provides the opportunity to influence the decision processes of the school or district.

At the same time, there are counter-pressures against participation. Peer pressures may be exerted on teachers not to participate unless a climate of acceptance for the planning project has been carefully developed. Participation in a planning project may be seen as extra work without extra pay, which may be resented by non-participants more than by those who participate. It can be seen as a device to co-opt the teachers without really listening to their concerns.

Interaction between professionals and non-professionals in planning is not always smooth. This may be a factor in recruitment. Teachers may resent spending time explaining matters to parents and students which they regard as professional matters they have spent years in learning. Special efforts may be necessary to work with parents and students to bring them "up to speed" on some issues, so that they need not draw upon the time of the teacher and administrator participants for explanations. For example, planning discussions may involve terms like "individualized instruction" or "average daily attendance" or "team teaching", which are perfectly familiar to teachers but quite unclear to others. They may resent spending time explaining such things to others in a group.[46] Respect for the expertise of all participants is essential in planning, not least that of the teacher.

When teachers are recruited to participate in planning, the teachers' organizations may have concerns. One may be that participation in planning may siphon off workers who might otherwise put that energy into association work. Another concern may be overlapping activities. The association may have committees that are supposed to be dealing with some of the same problems that are under study in the planning process. The attitudes of teachers toward the association is always a matter of great priority to the association's leaders. If it is felt that some benefits to teachers may be achieved by the planning process, through close collaboration with administration and community persons, this may be resented. The organizational needs of the association need to be considered.

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46. For a good discussion of the interaction of professionals and non-professionals in projects, see Schindler-Rainman, Eva and Ronald Lippitt, The Volunteer Community: Creative Use of Human Resources (2nd edition). Fairfax, Virginia, NTL Learning Resources Corp., 1975.

Most sensitive of all, of course, are areas in which the planning process touches on matters which the association feels are subject to negotiation through collective bargaining or some other process.

Service on larger advisory bodies may be handled on a totally voluntary basis so that teachers receive no extra benefits for the service. Interaction in faculty meetings and special interviews and meetings with staff may also be considered a part of normal job responsibilities. Intensive planning work on teams concerned with detailed problems should be accomplished on a paid basis, if at all possible. On certain planning teams, teachers may receive released time, students may receive credit, or some other specific benefits, and community members may receive some type of remuneration, especially if the work involves surveys, interviews, or extensive work outside meetings. In lieu of released time, inservice credit for salary advancement for teachers may be considered for participation in planning. A group of teachers may make a study of some educational issue which is needed in the planning process. Such a study may be more than the equivalent of a college course, especially if it is done in consultation with some acknowledged leaders in the subject. Sometimes, some phase of the planning work can be structured as a credit course, perhaps sponsored by a local college, or perhaps administered through the adult education program of the district.

Many teachers will participate in planning very willingly, without special recompense in time or money. A less ambitious project can be structured to require as little time as possible so that not too much is asked. Without question, however, an intensive planning process can be conducted more successfully if participants can be freed from some of their regular responsibilities, or remunerated in some other way.

Models of Recruitment

Four basic options are open for recruiting participatory planners. All of them have been used with varying degrees of success:

1. Appointment by school authorities (the blue ribbon committee)
2. Appointment by other groups (the representative council)
3. General election by constituencies
4. Self-appointment (open volunteering)

The blue ribbon committee has three major disadvantages. First, it limits the process to persons known to school officials. This may eliminate very valuable participants from consideration. Secondly, the credibility of the process as a change process may suffer. Non-participants who have a stake in the outcomes of the process must have confidence in the partipants. Thirdly, blue ribbon appointees may not be prepared to undertake the arduous task of participatory planning.

Appointment by special groups, such as the teachers' union, the PTA, or other groups, presents serious problems for any participatory process. This is because participants will owe their appointment to an outside agency, usually a group with its own values and policies. Inhibited interaction within the planning teams can result. The participants must be able to work as individuals, without having to refer all questions to outside groups.

Participants should represent others, but not come as delegates. This distinction may be narrow, but in practice it can be important. Participants must learn to speak for others as they work in the planning project. In this sense, they must represent many other persons. One of the often-repeated statements in the Palo Alto project was, "We aren't interested in your opinion if it is merely your opinion." This sounds a bit harsh, but it is meant to enforce the principle that participatory planning is not a bull session, or a time for the sharing of ignorance. It is to be a process based on information, including information on the way in which groups of teachers, students, and parents feel about the issues under study. At the same time, members of the planning groups and teams should not have to account back to organized groups for the work they undertake or the conclusions they reach.

General election by constituencies is a useful procedure, but cumbersome. A disappointing number of persons may take the trouble to vote in such a process. Nevertheless, voting is the best device we have for establishing legitimacy. Parents can vote for parent participants, students for students, and teachers for teachers.

Self-nomination is often a useful device. When self-nomination or open volunteering is used, persons often turn up who are not well-known in the school or community but can make a significant contribution to the work. The roster of self-nominated persons may be screened by a small representative committee to choose the most workable planning groups. Other individuals who have volunteered can frequently be used in a variety of other ways somewhere in the process, depending upon interests and abilities.

It must be remembered that many excellent candidates for service in plan ing will not volunteer, but will serve if they are asked or appointed.

The most practical method is a combination of elections with a process of self-nomination and recruitment. This gives the legitimacy required through the election process, and also provides the opportunity to seek out people who are needed but will not be elected. This is an acceptable process because the planning groups are task groups, not boards which make decisions in which every vote counts. People recognize that special skills and different kinds of participants are needed.

After the planning group or groups are formed and the course of the work becomes clear, the groups themselves may be asked to think carefully about their membership to see if it would be desirable to have additional persons, who may then be recruited.

C. Establishing Legitimacy for a Participatory Planning Process

Before a final decision has been made to undertake participatory planning, and later during the period of recruiting participants and organizing

the project, it is important to establish legitimacy on all fronts: among the teachers and administrators; among the students and within the community; and, of course, with the board of education.

It goes without saying that the basis for establishing such legitimacy is the belief of the principal (in a school-level process) or the superintendent (in the case of a district-level project) that participatory planning will succeed and will assist the schools in solving problems and bringing about improved education.

The planning process must be widely seen as needed and as something which belongs in this school or system. Trust is needed that the project will lead somewhere and that the administration is above-board in its reasons for wanting to proceed with it.

Special preliminary workshops may be needed to establish such a basis for the project before making the final decision to go ahead.

A second problem of legitimacy occurs after initial steps have been taken and the participatory planning groups have been assembled. In addition to providing orientation and training for the direct participants, attention must be given to their feelings of legitimacy about the project they are about to undertake.

Nothing will substitute for close and active participation by the superintendent at this point, for a district-level project, or the principal, if work is undertaken at the school level. The time put in by the chief administrators is the primary clue to the importance of the project.

Other issues of legitimacy will be present, in addition to the basic question of the place of the project as a whole. Many staff members may feel that parents have no rightful role in dealing with certain issues. The special kinds of expertise brought to the project by parents, students, administrators, and teachers need to be aired.

Experience has shown that once initial distrust has been overcome, and providing the work is well-structured, all parties will soon appreciate the

contribution made by other groups and will enjoy the interaction among the various participants.

As the project moves along, still another type of legitimacy needs attention. People who may be affected but are not directly participating may begin to resent and even to undermine the project, unless channels are well-developed for two-way interaction on important questions. These channels must be both formal and informal, and there is no substitute for time invested in keeping them open. It is bad enough for teachers in routine circumstances to feel that matters affecting them are being discussed by administrators without the teachers' participation. It is worse to feel that the matters are being discussed by peers who are given special status in the planning project, without the opportunity to make input. The planners must establish a climate in which it is understood that they are working with and for others who are not directly serving as members of the planning groups.

D. Getting Started with Planning Groups: Orientation, Training, and Ground Rules

When the planning groups first meet to begin their work, two matters need attention. The first is orientation of the participatory planners. This includes giving them needed information and training necessary to get off to a good start. The second is the process of establishing some norms or guidelines by which the project will operate. These activities together constitute a "contract" between you as the project leader and the participants. The stage will be set for the remainder of the project by the opening activities.

ORIENTATION AND "TRAINING" OF GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Training and orientation of participants in participatory planning presents some dilemmas. We know that the process will work better if participants receive a thorough orientation to the task. At the same time, people are rightfully anxious to get on with the job.

In the Palo Alto project, the first planning teams were given extensive training, including four training sessions spaced one week apart, and an all-day workshop on a Saturday. Experience proved that this much training before beginning the task was not helpful. It is probably better to spend one or two meetings in carefully-structured orientation, and then to consult with the planners as the work moves along, scheduling further workshops or training sessions as needed.

Basic orientation should include the following:

1. The expectations you and the school district have for the planning project. Expectations include general matters, such as how the planning project is expected to improve the school or district. It also includes specifics, such as time demands on participants, and the anticipated schedule to be followed in the project. The anticipated product of the planning groups should be discussed in detail.

2. Some of the norms that should prevail in the planning project. A fuller discussion of norms follows in the next section.

3. Basic information on the school or district will be be required by participants. Do not assume that they know how the school or district operates. It may be appropriate to schedule a separate meeting for parent and student participants, to cover matters familiar to teachers and administrators. On the other hand, even teachers and administrators will be unfamiliar with some things which you, as the project director or administrator in charge, take for granted.

4. Resources and assistance available to the planners. The planning team needs to know who may be called upon for help; who will do necessary paper work; what supplies will be available and from whom; and many other similar matters.

5. The roles of some people relating to the project. Exactly how will the principal, superintendent, or project director work with the participants? How will other administrators relate to the project? What role will the board of education play?

These sessions should impart a sense of excitement about the work in prospect, and a sense of the pleasure of the process that lies ahead. The participants should leave the orientation meeting anticipating participation in a project that is interesting and important.

The legitimacy of the project needs to be reinforced in the orientation sessions. Special guests may be invited, such as members of the board of education or interesting persons who will be available to assist the project and consult with the participants. The orientation sessions will be valuable to the project director and/or principal or superintendent to give them a sense of how the project is understood by participants at the beginning. This will provide clues to the kinds of work and assistance needed to get started on the project.

In summary, the orientation sessions are the setting in which a contract is negotiated between all participants. This does not mean a formal contract on paper, but an agreement about why we are here and what we will be doing. The establishment of this contract is extremely important. It will be recalled later in the process by the participants. Considerable interaction among participants, as well as between participants and project leaders, should be arranged. Methods should be used to feed back what is said, to check for clarity and agreement. For example, after some initial orientation, the participants can be asked to meet in groups of six or eight, introduce themselves to each other, and then discuss what has been said to check for mutual understanding. Questions and concerns can then be reported back

from each small group in a reconvened large group meeting. Further discussion and negotiation on any of the orientation topics can then take place. Some of the discussion can deal with mechanical issues, such as times and places for meetings. It may also deal with more substantive issues, such as topics that are appropriate or not appropriate to deal with within the project.

Specialized Training

1. Training in the planning process.

All participants will need to know how the planning process works. A section on the stages of the planning process is included below. It is suggested that after the planning groups have been organized and have taken the initial steps toward scheduling their work, a special workshop should be held in which these planning stages are discussed. Experience has shown that if this material is presented in the orientation sessions, much of the subject matter will be lost. This is partly because the groups are still in the initial stages of formation. The attention of individuals is focused on other preliminary matters, such as, "What am I doing here?" It is also a result of information overload. Much needs to be covered in the orientation sessions and too much cannot be absorbed too quickly. Discussion of the details of the planning process is more appropriate at a slightly later stage, after some initial settling down.

2. Group process training.

The subject of group process training is complex. It is known from experience that group process problems may present serious difficulties in a planning project. Groups can become immobilized or disintegrate because of such problems.

Everyone in education is inclined to regard himself as an expert in group process skills. After all, we interact with people on a continuous basis, in classes or in meetings. The fact is, however, that few people in school systems are likely to possess good group process skills.

Some have a bias against group process training. This may result from bad previous experiences; from fear generated from hearsay about certain techniques; or from a general attitude which sees interpersonal issues as irrelevant to getting on with the "real work". The problem in participatory planning is that the "real work" is, to a great extent, the development of interpersonal relationships which can facilitate planning and the implementation of plans.

School districts often employ teachers or psychologists who believe they are good group process trainers. Beware! Group process skills which are useful in therapy, or even in classrooms, may not be appropriate in participatory planning. A small amount of group process training does not make a good trainer. Even more importantly, the planning process is heavily task-oriented, not oriented toward personal growth or person skills in relating to others. Group process skills which are heavily psychological in nature may be less than useful for your purposes. In the Palo Alto project, it was found that district psychologists were not very helpful in assisting planning groups, even though they are competent group process consultants for other purposes.

The important distinction to bear in mind is the distinction between group process techniques which are task-oriented and those which are person-oriented. Task-oriented skills include such activities as brainstorming, force-field analysis, and a variety of other methods of group problem-solving and decision-making. Person-oriented skills include communication skills, and a variety of different methods for analyzing the failure of groups or individuals to interact successfully. Person- and task-oriented skills are very closely related. Many findings from research and experience are useful to both.

In participatory planning, person-oriented skills are urgently needed in times of special difficulty and are helpful at all times. However, extensive training in these skills is probably not possible within the constraints of a

planning project and would be strongly resisted by the participants if you tried it.

Certain task-oriented skills may be extremely useful at the appropriate points in the planning process. At special times, training in these skills will be warmly accepted by the planning groups. These skills are discussed more fully in the section on the stages of the planning process, below.

During the orientation stages and later, the recommended procedure is to discuss the fact that good group process work may become important to the success of the project. Put it in the learning context. Say things like: "We are all going to learn a great deal by participating in this project. We all may need to brush up on some of these group skills, or learn new ones. They will be applied directly to the task at hand. They may also be very useful to us as individuals after this project is finished. Don't regard group problems as unusual, or as personal failures."

Good consultation should be made available to the project, for both person-oriented group process skills and for task-oriented techniques. A member of the school staff may fill this need, or arrangements may be made with a qualified consultant to be available. Sometimes teachers or administrators have had extensive experience and training in these skills, but have had little opportunity to use them within the school district.

3. Skills in gathering and using information.

Information-gathering is another complex topic. Depending upon the particular project, you may need surveys, hearings, interviews, literature searches, observations, special visits, or other methods. Careful, skilled information-gathering is essential. Participants in planning projects can carry out nearly any type of data-gathering, but some methods will require assistance and consultation. Training in advance of need is probably not desirable, except to discuss the types of information which may be needed

and the availability of assistance or consultation. Each group will make its own decisions about what information to gather and what methods to use. A detailed discussion of data-gathering in participatory planning is included later in this chapter.

4. Training in futuring.

"Futuring" is an activity that is just coming into its own and is still slightly suspect as an occupation. "Futurists" are regarded by some as dreamers and wishful thinkers; nevertheless, the number of professional futurists continues to grow. Courses on the future and futuring are taught in increasing numbers in colleges and universities. The serious literature on the subject is expanding at an accelerating pace. The American Futurist Society publishes a quality magazine and attracts many prominent leaders to its meetings and conventions.

One type of futuring is the projection of present trends into the future. Educational planning has always included this activity. For example, projected future enrollment data are used for present facilities planning. Projected openings in the job market may aid in vocational curriculum planning.

Analyses of trends in achievement scores are widely reported in the press and have lately been bringing about a call for planning to reverse trends seen as undesirable.

A different type of futuring emphasizes the creation of the future by those of us living in the present. Present trends are regarded as useful information, but all present trends are regarded as subject to change, depending upon our actions. In this view, we are not the victims of the future, but the creators of it; we will get the future we deserve, because we will bring it about. This attitude is akin to some of the motivation behind participatory planning.

Techniques for futuring are becoming widely used, some of which can be very helpful in a participatory planning project. One such technique is the writing of scenarios. A scenario is a description of a chain of events extending from the present to some time in the future, perhaps five or ten years away. With a little imagination, three or more scenarios can be written about the future of your school or district, all of which are plausible.

In the Palo Alto project, three scenarios were written by participants to illustrate possible futures. One, called "status quo extended", described more of the same of everything now happening. Present trends were extrapolated over five or ten years. In some school situations, that results in a bleak prospect.

A second possible future was labeled "economic collapse". In this scenario, the nation suffered a severe depression, disrupting education beyond anything we have yet known.

The third future was labeled "cultural transformation". Significant and unexpected changes were proposed as possible in science, in values, and in public institutions. Many of the present problems disappeared with the rise of new attitudes toward the purposes of education on the part of parents and students. A different set of problems took their place.

The writing of scenarios is only one "futuring" technique. Others are described by Zeigler.[47] You may be interested in inventing some. Students often find futuring very interesting and they reveal a great deal about their attitudes toward school in the present by their statements about the future.

While futuring can be "gimmicky" and unrelated to the ongoing decision processes of the school or district, it can also be a very serious undertaking. It can add spice to a participatory planning project, and can serve as a means for developing valuable insights which can assist planning. A futuring activity might be used as part of the project orientation.

A handbook on futuring in school districts, developed in the Palo Alto project, is available through the Santa Clara, Calif. Department of Education.[48]

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47. Zeigler, Warren L., Planning as Action: Techniques of Inventive Planning Workshops, Educational Policy Research Center, Syracuse University, 1972.

48. McCollough, Tom, Mary Moser, and O.W. Markley, Futuring: A Futures Primer for Local Education Agencies. Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Santa Clara County, California, 1974.

NORMS IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Norms are ideas in the minds of participants or employees about what should or should not be done under specified circumstances. Mills defines them as guidelines for both feelings and actions.[49] Norms are present and important in any organization. Since the special planning project is a special organization within the school system, it needs its own norms, which may not be the same as norms outside the planning groups.

You may prefer the term "ground rules" instead of "norms". "Ground rules" sounds more rigid to some persons, however. That term may imply externally imposed rules laid down in a paternalistic manner. Norms are guides to behavior and feelings which are internally accepted by the participants. A list of rules is not an attractive prospect, but a discussion of some guidelines and practices that will contribute to success will be accepted.

Without some attention to norms, time may be wasted and expectations unclear. Counter-productive or inappropriate norms may be developed. Different individuals may be operating with differing norms, with resulting misunderstanding and resentment.

Norms are always present, whether consciously or unconsciously. An example of an unconscious norm sometimes found in schools is the practice of heavily criticizing any new idea. Statements may be made, such as, "We tried that twenty years ago", or "That sounds good in theory, but it does not work in practice". It is discouraging to work in a group in which such a norm holds sway. It is difficult and disheartening to suggest new ideas only to have them attacked or criticized before there is opportunity to explore their merits. Such a destructive norm can be brought to light and examined.

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49. Mills, Theodore M., The Sociology of Small Groups, Englewood Cliffs, (N.J.): Prentice-Hall, 1967, pp. 75-76.

Counter-productive attitudes toward the group may underlie such statements, or they may simply reflect an unconscious pattern of behavior. With good leadership, such a norm can be changed, much to the benefit of the planning process.

Unspoken norms govern much of our behavior in organizations. We know, for example, whether it will be acceptable to be late to meetings, or unacceptable. We expect certain individuals to speak and act, and others to remain silent, under differing circumstances.

Some norms which apply to any group meeting may need discussion at the beginning of participatory planning meetings. For instance, the group may need to strike an agreement about times for starting and stopping meetings. This agreement becomes a norm.

Our special concern here is with norms which are particularly important in participatory planning. All conscious norms are subject to discussion and group agreement as the planning moves along. The process of developing good working norms is part of the process of developing a good working team.

It is not necessarily a good idea to discuss or clarify too many norms at the beginning. A few which seem most important can be discussed at first. Others can be brought up later as the need becomes apparent.

Experience and research show that participants will quickly internalize new norms for planning that are reasonable, and will begin to live by them. Careful attention to some norms is just good project management. Some norms important in participatory planning are the following:

a. Discussions must focus on evidence, not on opinions or unstated value positions.

   Planning is based on the creative use of information. The conversations must focus on this information, and not dwell on personal opinions and values. Information of many types, from many sources, can be used.

b. All participants in planning are learners.

All participants bring knowledge and skills, but all have much to learn. Everyone has to be both a teacher and a learner, and be open to both roles.

c. The planners are responsible to a broader constituency at all times.

The planners have an obligation to be in touch with others who may be affected by their work, to gather information and to solicit ideas, suggestions, feelings, and attitudes.

d. The planning group is task-oriented.

The successful accomplishment of the task must be kept in focus at all times. A planning group is not an advisory group, nor is any member present in a purely advisory capacity. All members must undertake specific responsibilities, both within the group when it meets, and outside the group meetings.

e. The planning group is a group of peers.

Whatever roles individuals play outside the planning group, everyone wears a different hat while working with the planning groups.
Staff members, students, and parents work together as a team to accomplish the task. As with any team, assignments may be made according to strengths and interests. Positions and statuses outside the planning groups do not apply to work within the group, except as tools to be used to help the process along. Interaction is open and freely focused on the task at hand.

f. Members of the planning group are planners.

Members are charged to analyze the problems contained in their charge; to gather and examine data; to give active consideration to a variety of alternative solutions; and to move toward the development of specific proposals.

g. Time may be given to group process problems.

On occasion, group process problems will become a serious impediment to the work. Often, problems having to do with the functioning of the group are more

difficult than problems relating to the task at hand. It is essential that the participatory planning group establish the norm that it's o.k. to stop and talk about the group itself and to be open to observation and assistance as a group.

Good leadership is essential at this point. Unfortunate consequences can develop from either extreme: ignoring group problems when they hamper the work, or diverting energy and attention to group process issues when they are not strongly relevant to getting on with the work.

h. Help will be sought when needed.

The planning group must be open to the need for assistance. This may be technical assistance on gathering or analyzing information, assistance on group process problems or techniques, or assistance in shaping the work toward the development of plans.

i. The strengths and abilities of group members will be utilized.

Too often groups do not make use of the assistance available within their own ranks. It is important that the full range of resources available within the group be known and used. This calls for self-disclosure of skills and experience by members, and the expectation that each has special resources to contribute. Some members need help in recognizing the resources they themselves possess.

j. Creativity is encouraged.

If we accept the premise that the future does not have to look like the past, simple projections of present activities and programs into the future do not do justice to the task. Many valuable contributions begin as "far out" ideas. Planning groups should maintain a climate in which wide-ranging thought is encouraged. This does <u>not</u> mean believing in change for the sake of change.

k. Methods of reaching decisions will be agreed upon by the group.

> Many methods for reaching group decisions are available. The "parliamentary" method of decision by majority vote is only one of them, and may not always be appropriate. Methods are available for helping groups reach consensus.[50]
>
> For example, members can be polled to discover who is unalterably opposed to a particular idea; who is indifferent; and who is supportive. Steps can then be taken to determine whether the proposal can be altered to make it acceptable to those persons most opposed.
>
> When the time for making decisions arrives, discussion is needed about the norms and procedures the group will follow.

E. Stages in the Planning Process

After the participants in the planning process have been recruited and given basic orientation, working teams must be established. Depending on the structure of your project, these may consist of only one small planning team, or a larger planning body with general oversight, which divides into smaller teams, or a larger body which, in turn, appoints smaller teams of planners. At this stage, all of the participants should become familiar with the stages of the planning process. Target dates should also be established.

All participatory planning projects will move through definable stages, as will any other planning process. These are the logical steps from initial idea to completed proposals. These stages can be shortened or lengthened, depending upon your purposes. In practice, the stages will not necessarily follow in a neat sequence. There will be a great deal of overlapping, and some of the

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50. Napier and Gershenfeld, op. cit., Chapter 6

stages will be repeated as more is learned about the problem and as issues are clarified or redefined. In other words, these stages are not a simple linear process, one following neatly upon the other. There will be feedback loops. The issues will come in and out of focus. Each time this happens, however, progress will have been made. The normal stages in the process are as follows:

1. Problem definition and renegotiation

The subjects to be taken up for planning may be determined in advance with more or less exactness. Even when the charge to the planning group(s) is quite explicit and exact, a period of time will be necessary in which the participants work through the charge, understand it thoroughly, and accept it.

This may involve a renegotiation of the charge. The original purposes of the planning project may become unclear after initial discussion. They may be more extensive, or less extensive, than the newly-formed planning group feels is possible or appropriate. Such renegotiation can be very useful for two reasons: it serves to clarify the problem and the work to be done; and it creates ownership of the project on the part of the participants.

2. Initial analysis of the problem

Once agreement has been reached on the scope and nature of the work to be done, the planning group will enter a period of analysis of the problem(s) in order to seek out alternative approaches for the planning task.

This is a difficult stage. Passing over it too quickly may result in a great deal of wasted effort later in the process. Several alternative courses of action should be considered carefully.

Financial resources available to the group, human resources available within the group and from outside sources, and the initial interests and concerns of the group members themselves will enter into the deliberations. Certain group process techniques may be very useful at this point. Brainstorming

is a specific technique in which all possible ideas are elicited from group members without evaluation. Lists are made of possible good ideas and approaches to the problem at hand, without stopping to discuss them. Everyone is asked to mention every possible idea that occurs to him or her, no matter how foolish or ill-considered it might sound. The purpose is to let ideas flow without inhibition or interruption, and without the usual constraints of wishing not to sound foolish, or fearing the reaction of others in the group. Later there is time to evaluate ideas and to adopt, amend, revise, or drop any and all suggestions.

Brainstorming is only one of several group techniques which are available. Others include debate, force-field analysis, and two-person interviews. We strongly recommend that careful attention be paid to the techniques by which the group analyzes the planning problem. A group process consultant who is expert in group problem-solving can be very valuable in the planning process at this point. Excellent books are available to assist the project staff. Two of the best are:

> Napier, Rodney W., and Matti K. Gershenfeld, Groups: Theory and Experience, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973.
>
> Schmuck, Richard A., and Philip J. Runkel, Handbook of Organizational Development in Schools, Palo Alto: National Press Books, 1972.

At the conclusion of this stage of the work, initial decisions should be made which will guide the group in seeking information and moving toward final proposals.

3. Information gathering

All planning makes extensive use of information. You may need information obtained through formal needs assessment procedures, interviews, visits to other schools, research reports, educational articles and books, and a variety of other sources. Test scores, attendance data, opinion data, community statistics, and census data might all be useful.

Information gathering can be a trap. It is relatively easy to go after information - the difficulty is going after useful information. Planning groups can expend too much valuable energy and time in information-seeking, and not enough in the more difficult work of thinking through the problems.

Some important points about information need special consideration:

a. Information is sometimes not freely given. Information is power. Those who have it possess an asset that they may not be willing to share. The gathering of information is a sensitive process requiring an atmosphere of trust.

b. Information is expensive. Gathering it can quickly exhaust available time and money. Careful thought must be given to the probable use of information before it is gathered.

c. Faulty information can be damaging. The credibility of the planning process may depend upon the accuracy of the information that is used and that becomes public. You may have to defend the reliability of any information used, and all information will be subject to a variety of interpretations.

d. Complete information is never available. Under no circumstances do we know everything that we might like to know. After we have done the best possible job in gathering information, there will still be need for judgment and interpretation. Information will not give us all the answers.

Sometimes it is possible to utilize a special auxiliary group to the main planning group as the information-gathering squad. Volunteers are often available who are skilled in collecting information and enjoy doing it, and will perform this service for the group. In the Palo Alto project, a great deal of information-gathering was conducted by special task forces before the planning groups were organized. While this process produced a great deal of useful information, it also produced a great deal which was not well used. More detailed discussion of information-gathering follows in a later section.

4. Development of Tentative Proposals

The expected output of the participatory planning process should have been determined well in advance, as discussed earlier. At this stage in the planning process, it is time to formulate some possible proposals in the form of constitutional goals or operational goals, making use of the initial analysis of the problem(s) and the information that has been gathered.

A mistake that is sometimes made is attempting to state the most general and ideal goals first, and then moving to specific operational goals. It is sometimes necessary to work backwards. Tentative operational goals can be formulated on the basis of the thinking and information-gathering that has occurred, then the over-all meaning of these more specialized goals can be examined in the form of the broader goals which are implied by the operational goals.

5. Checking the Tentative Proposals with the Broader Audience

Since participatory planning is an organizational change process, this stage is vital if the work of the planning group is eventually to be implemented. Depending upon the level of the planning undertaken, tentative proposals should be presented to the public, to school staffs, or to student and parent groups. At this stage, nothing has been settled. The planners must be open to the additional information, for revision of proposals, even for a thoroughly-revised planning process. Several things must especially be checked out:

a. Check for clarity of meaning. Planning groups, like all groups, begin to talk in a specialized language which others do not understand. For example, suppose a proposal contains the term, "personalized learning". Such a term may mean a great deal to the planners - they may have a rather exact definition for it. It may not be at all clear to persons not directly involved with the planning group.

b. Check for understanding the behavioral implications of proposals. Proposed changes in schools have often failed when general agreement was obtained from entire school staffs, only to have it discovered later that people

did not understand what the proposal meant in terms of day-to-day work.[51] The result may be failure in implementation. It is probably better to face such problems midway in the planning process than later during the implementation process.

In addition to clarity of meaning and behavioral implications, it is at this stage that initial agreement and commitment must be obtained from a broader group than those directly involved in planning.

Special large group workshops may be very useful as a means of involving many people in helping to shape the final form of the proposals. It is not enough to inform the larger audience in a process of one-way communication. There must be opportunity for interaction. Unanimous agreement is too much to hope for, but sufficient agreement must be reached to make further progress feasible. Careful attention must be paid to the involvement of key persons and groups, including those who will bear final responsibility for assent to proposals, such as board of education members, as well as affected groups of teachers and parents.

6. Final Proposal Development

This stage requires a small group of persons skilled at writing, to put the work in acceptable written form for presentation to the necessary board or agencies, and for the use of school staffs.

The process of developing the final proposals often reveals unforeseen "gaps" in the work. New information may be needed. Compromises may be necessary as it becomes apparent that proposals are more expensive than was thought earlier, or that two components are incompatible in ways not previously seen. Those doing the final writing are always tempted to write in a few of their own pet ideas. Final proposal development is not a

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51. Charters, W.W., Jr., and Roland J. Pellegrin, "Barriers to the Innovation Process: Four Case Studies of Differentiated Staffing", University of Oregon, mimeographed, 1972.

trivial matter, but takes time and care.

F. Stages in the Life of Planning Groups

During the stages in the planning process discussed in the previous section, the planning teams or groups will simultaneously move through different stages of group life.

Planning groups move through some stages which are common for all groups, even those which are not oriented toward a specific problem or product. On the other hand, planning groups move through some stages which are unusual for groups, and which require an unusually high level of teamwork and trust.

During the initial planning stages, the group is beginning to feel its way toward identity as a group. The group is probably unusual for all of its members. It is not simply another reshuffling of familiar faces within the school or district. It contains some new faces, and even the familiar people have unclear roles in the new situation.

As the leadership is helping to orient the group, helping to establish some norms, and trying to set up optimal conditions for success, value differences are surfacing, personalities are emerging, and attitudes toward the group are taking shape. Some will feel discomfort stemming from frustration and insecurity. Individuals deal in different ways with insecurity. Some may withdraw from the discussions or become excessively dependent upon the leader or some other member, or make aggressive remarks, such as humorous undercuts or snide side comments. Some may curry favor with the leader or attempt to gloss over initial problems by changing the subject or bringing up irrelevant matters.

A desire to get on with the task will be mixed with a desire to go slowly until the group has come into focus.

Some will probably drop out. The time commitment may appear too great, or the developing charge of the group unattractive. Negative feelings

toward some members of the group or toward the leader may be a cause.

After a period of milling and uncertainty, a successful group will coalesce around a common understanding of the task, commitment to it, and a sense of comfort and trust in each other and in the group as a team. If this is not happening, it is time for the leader to take special pains to examine what is happening within the group, to spend time discussing group processes directly with the group, and to seek consultation about specific steps which may be taken to help develop the group into a working team.

As the work moves along, two kinds of activities which are common to all groups will occur within the planning group as well. These are generally known as task functions and maintenance functions. They may be carried out by different persons who are especially good at one or the other, or the same individuals can sometimes perform one of these functions, sometimes the other. Some task functions are the following:

a. Initiating: proposing specific tasks or goals; defining a problem for the group; suggesting a procedure or idea.

b. Seeking information or opinions: requesting facts; seeking information about a group concern; asking for expressions of feelings; soliciting expressions of values held by members; seeking suggestions and ideas.

c. Giving information or opinions: offering facts; providing relevant information about a group concern; stating a belief about a matter before the group; offering suggestions or ideas.

d. Clarifying and elaborating: interpreting ideas or suggestions; clearing up confusion; defining terms; indicating alternatives and issues before the group.

e. Summarizing: pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after the group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.

f. Consensus testing: asking to see if the group is nearing a decision; sending up trial balloons to test possible conclusions.

Some maintenance functions are the following:

a. Harmonizing: attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tensions; asking people to explore differences.

b. Gatekeeping: helping to keep communications channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures that permit sharing remarks.

c. Encouraging: being friendly, warm, and responsive to others; indicating by facial expression or remark the acceptance of another's contributions.

d. Compromising: offering a compromise which yields status or admits error; modifying a position in the interest of group cohesion or growth.

e. Standard-setting and testing: testing whether the group is satisfied with its procedures; pointing out explicit or implicit norms which have been set in order to make them available for examination.

As a planning group becomes a working team committed to its task, a sense of excitement should be present. Participants should enjoy group meetings and look forward to the next steps in the task. The group should be reaching a level of confidence in its own abilities to do the work and to work together. It should have a good level of self-determination, without dependency upon outside direction. At the same time, a planning group must develop contact with others within the organization and with the larger audience interested in the work of the group within the community. It will need to grow in its feelings of competence to develop and maintain those ties outside its own membership. This once again calls for the development of trust and teamwork within the group. Group members will need to sense that any member speaks for the whole group in developing outside relationships.

Some stages in the life of planning groups call for intensive interaction directly on the planning task. Definition of the problem and development of a plan of work, choosing from among alternative courses of action fall into that category.

At a later stage, some of the group's work may be done with less intensive interaction. Information-gathering and working with other individuals and groups within the school and the community may be carried out by individuals or pairs.

Following a period of less intensive work as a team, the group will need to come together once again for intensive interaction to analyze what has happened, to examine data and information from various sources, and to plan the next steps. Frequently it will be necessary to step back, redefine the problem, and seek additional interaction outside the group, or additional data.

Eventually, the work of each group or subgroup will need to be put into the form of written proposals. This is usually best accomplished by one or two members. They must have the confidence of the rest of the group. Output of subgroups becomes part of the over-all plans developed by the project.

A successful planning group will move through the stages of the planning process while, at the same time, moving through these important stages of group development. These are separate but inter-related matters which you will need to monitor.

How will you know a good planning group when you see one? Napier and Gershenfeld provide a useful checklist of conditions that are ideally present in a problem-solving group.[52] These apply to a planning group as well.

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52. From GROUPS: THEORY AND EXPERIENCE, by R.W. Napier and M.K. Gershenfeld, copyright 1973 by Houghton Mifflin Co. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

1. The goals of the group are clearly understood by the participants.
2. Mechanisms that insure the active participation of the minority are established for making decisions.
3. A concerted effort is made to discover resource people within the group.
4. Ideas are explored in a non-evaluative climate.
5. Participation is shared, and control is not in the hands of one or two dominant members.
6. Member roles are differentiated according to group needs and specific skills.
7. Problems are stated as conditions and explored in terms of the factors causing the particular condition to exist.
8. The group is aware of its own potency to effect change and somehow involves the support of necessary individuals in both the diagnostic and solution phases of problem-solving.
9. Communication channels are kept open by using process observers and making efforts to look at both the task and the emotional dimensions of the group's work together.
10. Size and physical arrangements are deemed appropriate to the task.
11. Participants are considered in terms of status and power and the composition of the group is such that ideas or solutions are maximized.
12. Time is long enough for the necessary problem-solving phases, but short enough to be a motivational factor.
13. Solutions are (as far as possible) testable and the impact of the decision is evaluated.
14. The group is held accountable for its own decisions.

Some additional conditions should be added for participatory planning groups:

1. The group is working closely and effectively with others inside the school or district who may be concerned about the planning process.
2. Information is being sought and used by the group when appropriate.

3. The group is able to shift the nature of its internal processes to meet changing needs of the planning project.
4. The group is seeking help when it is needed, for substantive issues and for group process matters.

G. MOTIVATION AND INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS - SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES

Motivation for staying with the planning project and doing a good job is closely tied to good group processes. A more detailed discussion of motivation follows in the next section of this Handbook.

Lack of progress and poor motivation will probably not be the result of a shortage of ideas or information. Sometimes they may result from straightforward structural factors which can be rather easily corrected: lack of clarity about the work to be done; poor use of time; or related matters.

Most often, group process matters will be the bottleneck. Either interpersonal factors among group members will interfere with the process, or the group will find that it is unskilled in the joint clarification of problems and the making of decisions. Paralysis can set in. Groups can meet for several weeks without making any progress. The sense of wasted time can become very strong. Personal feelings about other group members can become extremely negative. Consultation may be urgently needed. A fresh problem-solving approach can bring a group to life.

In the beginning stages of the group's work, during the orientation period, the group should have been led to understand and expect that problems may arise. Provision should have been made for dealing with them. A norm should have been established which makes it acceptable for the group to express the need for a better group process, and to seek consultation, without criticizing the leader or other members in personal terms.

Dealing with Difficult Individuals

Some people do not work well in groups; others simply do not wish to work as team members. A project should provide for individual work. Some

individuals can carry out important assignments without much team contact. For example, information about alternative schools in other districts can be collected by one or two individuals, working independently. Sometimes a problem with individuals within a group can be solved by such assignments.

All group members are familiar with certain types of people who persistently present problems to the group. The domineering talker is one type - he will bore everyone to death. The persistent blocker is a second type - he may see no good in anything. The uncommitted participant is another type - he may disdain the group, show up late, leave early, and bad-mouth the project between meetings. The extensive literature on group processes offers many suggestions for coping with difficult situations. These problems should not simply be tolerated, particularly if they begin to hamper the project or seriously affect morale. Steps should be taken to deal with them.

Groups will find their own methods for dealing with difficulties, for better or for worse. Some planning teams have been known to schedule meetings without the knowledge of members whose presence was annoying. More often, good participants will simply stop attending meetings, or drop out of the project altogether, rather than face the prospect of another irritating experience with the offending person(s). It is usually better for the project if the leaders recognize and deal with problems as they arise, rather than waiting them out or ignoring them, provided excessive attention to group problems does not itself hamper the work of the project.

Very often, problems will be caused by persons who simply do not know the effect they are having on others. They may be unaware that they are talking too much, or that they are increasingly resented by others in the group. They may not be conscious, for example, of negative, blocking behavior which discourages others from speaking or making suggestions. These problems are simpler than those stemming from more deliberately-held attitudes or deeper underlying problems.

Value dissidents present a different situation. Individuals may find that they differ on the level of basic values with most of the other members of the group and, for this reason, may find continuing in the group difficult. This may require explicit recognition of value differences, with compromises for building differing values into the work of the team. Failing this, the value dissident may continually block or sabotage the group's progress and, more importantly, may speak for many others whose views deserve to be considered by the group. At times a separate team may be formed to work on problems from a different value perspective, particularly if the school may comfortably make provision for different programs according to different values. This, of course, will depend on the problem under study. Later, the work of two or more groups can be integrated into final proposals. If that procedure is followed, the problem of eventually dealing with the differences must not be avoided.

A still different problem may appear in a planning project in the form of pathological dissidents. In spite of careful recruitment processes, persons with character disorders, excessive need for recognition, or other serious difficulties, may plague a group. The project director or principal may find it necessary to confront such individuals and either help them to function more usefully or recommend that they leave the project.

Problems in Lay-Professional Interaction

Interaction between laypersons and professionals can be another problem area. In individual cases, special consultation by the principal or project director with the persons in question may be helpful. Certain teachers or administrators come off sounding hostile and overbearing to certain parents. It is often useful to match professionals with a bad attitude toward laypersons with laymen who are particularly strong, to work together on some phase of the project.

Individual cases of resentment between professionals and laypersons can be handled with individuals as they arise. The more general problem of lay-professional interaction deserves more comment.

In the Palo Alto project, interaction between laypersons and professionals worked well, but not without some friction. In matters most directly affecting and concerning the professionals, planning team members who are also staff members must be individuals who have the respect and confidence of the staff, and must handle most of the interaction between planning team and staff, for the benefit of the entire team.

The greatest lay-professional resentment within planning teams occurs when professionals find themselves working with laypersons who are obviously not strong in their own right. This does not necessarily mean that lay participants need to be professionals or hold high-status jobs; only that they should possess strength and personal competence in some area relevant to the work at hand. An area of such special strength may be making contacts in the community, for example. During the recruitment of volunteers, this need for strengths to match and complement the strengths of the professionals should be considered.

Professionals can work as a team with nonprofessionals, if the norms of planning and the bounds of the project are clear, so that professional expertise and authority are not undermined. For instance, consider the situation in which greater "personalization" of secondary education is under study. Changes in that direction may well affect counselors and guidance personnel. There must be both guidance and counseling personnel on the planning team. This does not imply that they must dominate the team; but their points of view must be clearly and strongly presented. The process of doing that may help the counseling staff to clarify and strengthen some features of the existing counseling function. The result of a planning process in which some counseling issues are examined may be changes in the role of counselors which will benefit students and counselors alike. It is a different story if, in fact, professional

positions are at stake. Professionals cannot be expected to work as team members in a process which may result in elimination of their own jobs. That is not the same as modifications in professional roles and practices which may develop out of the planning process.

Motivating factors toward good performance as planners

Motivation to volunteer for participatory planning is one thing. Motivation to stick with it and do a good job is something else.

The Palo Alto project shed considerable light on the problem of motivation for persistence and performance on the part of volunteer planners. Many participants gave enormous amounts of time and energy to the work; some stayed but contributed little; others dropped out. All assisted in the study of participatory planning by completing questionnaires.

First of all, participants were asked what they enjoyed most about the Project and what they liked least.

The best-liked feature for most of the participants was the personal interaction the Project afforded. It was pleasurable to interact with others who shared a strong interest in education. Parents, teachers, and non-teaching staff alike appreciated learning and exchanging viewpoints with the other participants. This included especially interaction between community people and school people.

Working as a team was also a source of satisfaction for parents, students, and teachers. Learning more about education was a motivating factor for parents, students, and non-teaching staff, although this was not a factor for teachers.

Accomplishing the objectives of the Project was less important, from this perspective, than interacting with others, and learning. These participants were not dissatisfied with failing to reach their objectives. The important point is that the motivating factors for the day-to-day work of the Project had more to do with the personal interactions and learning than with accomplishing the finished proposals.

This should come as no surprise. The rewards for work in any organization are not merely those of producing the final product, but include personal recognition, the pleasure of interaction, and the pleasures of self-development and challenge.

Ultimately, it is very important, of course, that the project's objectives be realized. The way people feel in the long run will depend upon their perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of their work. Meanwhile, don't overlook the importance of these "lesser" matters - don't underestimate the importance of the pleasure of the process.

Sources of dissatisfaction are also important to note. Among those who remained with the Project, dissatisfaction was very low in Palo Alto. The major sources of dissatisfaction included: (a) the failure of some participants to work as a team; (b) frustration at the slow pace of the process; (c) frustration because of heavy time demands; and (d) dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity of the task and lack of accomplishing the intended goals. The single greatest source of dissatisfaction was the failure of people to work successfully in teams.

Dropouts from the Project were questioned as to their reason for leaving. The major reason given was time pressure. When time is given as a reason this, of course, must be interpreted cautiously. Individuals will often find time when other motivating factors are present, and will mention time demands as a convenient reason for leaving without disclosing other reasons.

Some participants became disturbed by assumptions that changes in schools were inevitable. The phrase, "I don't believe in change for the sake of change", was often heard. It is probably true that participatory planning attracts persons favorably inclined toward change, or tend not to be put off by the prospect of significant change. Others - parents, staff, students, and administrators alike - tend to believe in the status quo, for both good reasons and bad. This is not a criticism. No known evidence exists that certain attitudes toward change are related to competence or other personal qualities.

The prospect of change will be a positive motivating factor to some, however, and just the opposite to others.

Motivation for good performance was studied in the Palo Alto project in other ways, with interesting results.

Volunteers in the project put in an average of nearly four hours per week on their own time. Parents put in the most time (an average of 4.35 hours); administrators, the least time (an average of 2.43 hours). Contributing more time does not necessarily imply better participation, of course. The figures demonstrate two facts: a tremendous amount of time will be contributed voluntarily to planning if people are motivated, but the amount of time available in each week is limited. Many weeks are required to accumulate large amounts of time devoted to the work.

The quality of participation was measured by the self-reported acceptance of several tasks important to the Project. Teachers scored highest in this measure of quality, followed by parents, administrators, and students.

The general acceptance of the planner role was also measured. Teachers accepted the role most completely; parents and students less so. This suggests that more work is needed with parents and students than with teachers and administrators in clarifying and seeking acceptance of the type of work that needs to be done.

In general, the participants put in a highly satisfactory amount of time, accepted the tasks and the role of planner very well.

It was discovered that participants who worked in mixed groups, which included parents, teachers, students, and administrators, performed better, both in amount of time contributed and the quality of work, measured by acceptance and performance of the tasks. This was true for all groups, except administrators or other non-teaching staff members.

In other words, serving in a mixed group appears to be a positive motivating factor for others, but not for administrators. This is important for administrators to realize: others may not have the same attitudes toward working

in mixed groups that they themselves have. This is probably because administrators more commonly work with a cross-section of people, while teachers, students, and parents do not so often have this experience.

Accepting the role of planner had a positive effect on the work of parents. With them, it was associated with a higher quality of work and a greater contribution of time. Teaching the role carefully appears to make a difference. Role acceptance also positively affected the quality of work of teachers.

Participants were asked about their perceptions of leaders in the school district; specifically, if they believed these leaders looked favorably upon their work as volunteer planners and would be receptive to proposals. Although the effects were not strong, the quality of work was measurably higher among those who saw school leaders as interested and responsive to their work.

Interestingly, previous participation in educational projects negatively affected the time given by teachers and students, and the quality of work of the administrators.

These data about motivating forces are not definitive, but suggestive. Persons interested in a detailed analysis of participation in Palo Alto may request a full report of these studies, published separately.[53] Several conclusions may be drawn from the Palo Alto experience:

1. Pay special attention to the development of teamwork among participants. Lack of teamwork will be a source of frustration and dissatisfaction.
2. Time is precious. Keep the project moving as rapidly as possible so that participants have a sense of progress and good use of time.
3. Maintain clarity about the direction of work and expected outcomes at all times.

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53. Stromquist and Johnson, op. cit.

4. Help participants understand and carry out the tasks that are expected of them; keep their "planner role" clear.

5. Don't be afraid to combine teachers, administrators, students, and parents in working teams. Positive advantages may be gained from mixed teams.

6. Check and reinforce positive attitudes toward and from the school and district administration regarding the planning project.

7. Don't forget that the pleasures of interaction are an important motivating factor in the work. Reinforce the pleasurable aspects of interaction as much as possible.

8. Don't forget that learning is pleasurable. For teachers, learning through a planning project can be a form of professional job enrichment. Students and parents also enjoy the learning process. Reinforce the learning process by special means whenever possible.

H. NOTES ON THE LEARNING PROCESS WITHIN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

The learning process that goes on within a planning project has many dimensions. Mutual learning between educators and parents about each other is an important part of it. Intensive collaboration in planning is a different experience for purposes of such learning than other educator-parent encounters. Attitudes on either side may be changed by this experience, and both sides may learn better to serve the needs of the other. A quotation provided by Saxe illustrates the constant need for this type of learning:

> Like I say, I live by the school but I don't send my children there. They go to a school where the teachers are a little older. I feel many of the teachers are just too young. They don't have enough experience of life to know how to treat children, and especially Black and Puerto Rican children. Many of them just don't know about Black children or understand the community. I think they come to learn, but they're supposed to be there to teach.[54]

54. Saxe, op. cit., p. 35

While this quotation deals with a poor minority community in its relationships with the schools, similar statements can be heard in almost any community.

A planning process should result in mutual learning between the school and the community. It should result in the development of new insights about both the schools and the community which are helpful to everyone. It may even result in a redefinition of the school as an institution, as mutual expectations are clarified.

Many other types of learning should take place in planning. Education about education is one. Planning should serve as a means for bringing the most important developments from the human, educational, and social science into the thought processes and decision processes of the schools.

Education about the workings of schools and school districts will be necessary to successful performance of the planning, and will also be a result. A great many more people will be better informed about schools and school systems, including teachers, as well as parents and students. While this may be seen with some apprehension at the time, it should, in the long run, work to the good of the system. The same people who work as volunteers in planning will often be found later lobbying for more school funds, campaigning for bond issues and revenue elections, and working in countless other ways to support schools.

Education about planning will be part of the learning picture. Planning has certain features differentiating it from other activities. It draws upon data; it calls for the study of issues; it requires the consideration of alternatives. It requires the planners to come to understand that they do not work for themselves, but for the community.

Finally, participatory planning both requires and results in greater knowledge and experience in teamwork and group processes. These are transferable skills. Administrators can use them elsewhere in the school system,

as can teachers. Students and parents, too, find this kind of learning beneficial.

Learning is an important part of participatory planning. It probably can't be done at all unless most of the participants are willing to learn, including administrators. Learning will result from the work, and it will be enjoyed, if the project is a successful one. A basic issue for project management is how much explicit teaching to do, and when, within the project.

I. THE USE AND ABUSE OF INFORMATION IN PLANNING

Information is a basic tool in planning. Data are usually collected from many sources and used in many different ways. Those who are going to use the information should make the decision about what information is going to be gathered. In the Palo Alto project, a great deal of information was collected by special task forces prior to the formation of planning teams. The intention was to provide a data base for the use of the planners. This was not a good strategy. Much information, gathered at considerable cost in time and energy, was not used because it did not fit the needs, as discovered by the planners after the Project had started.

Information should not be collected until the appropriate point in the planning cycle has been reached. The problem or area for planning should be clearly identified, a strategy mapped out for studying the issues, and the information needs will follow.

It is often suggested that the first planning activity should be a needs assessment. Beware the needs assessment becoming a solution to the problem of how to begin planning! A needs assessment should be carefully structured into the planning process, not precede it. Needs cannot be assessed at random or in the abstract. Decisions must be made about subjects to be included in the assessment. Without careful consideration of how the information may be used, needs may be assessed which simply represent interests on the part of those setting up the exercise. Good information may be collected on matters which the school system can do nothing about, or is unwilling to do anything about.

Throughout the planning process, beware of the seductive simplicity of information-seeking, compared with more difficult tasks! Experience has shown that a group can pour tremendous energy into information-gathering, leaving little for carrying through the planning. Palo Alto participants did not find information-gathering to be as difficult as the tasks of problem definition and proposal development. In the first place, it is not as difficult, conceptually or intellectually; once you have decided what information to seek, the collection of information may become rather mechanical. In the second place, it is not as difficult from the standpoint of group process. The collection process itself does not require group problem-solving or decision-making.

It is true that collecting exploratory information can be very useful, but a great deal of thought should go into determining what information should be gathered for exploratory purposes.

In spite of the best efforts, information will not match its intended use very precisely. Often information, such as the results of a needs assessment, raises more questions than it answers, and results in the need to go back for more information.

Information is seldom studied carefully, except by persons who have a pressing need to do so. In the Palo Alto project, extensive reports were distributed to many persons providing detailed information collected through surveys and other exercises. Checking with individuals later revealed that few read these reports. Information is a tool to be used when there is a particular need for it.

Planning groups are likely to need help in interpreting data. The study of data is a specialized activity. If extensive effort has produced a set of data, it will be helpful to the planning process only if someone presents it in its most usable form and helps others to interpret it. According to Lippitt:

> "It is remarkable, but understandable, how little most learners use the reading of research reports and other informational input as a basis for deriving implications for decision-making and action-taking."

Practitioners in organizational development have studied the use of data in organizational change. Schmuck[55] describes three skills that are needed if data are to be well-used:

> First, the data must be collected in usable form.
>
> Second, someone must have the ability to raise the data to a level of significance, making it worthy of notice.
>
> Thirdly, someone must have the ability to incorporate the data into the process.

Any school or district, with its community, is a source of almost infinite data. Information can be gathered on student achievement levels. Data on student interests is a possibility. The attitudes and opinions of students, teachers, administrators, and parents on an unlimited variety of subjects may be ascertained.

Add to that a million other possibilities: provisions of state law; practices in other schools and districts; community data of various kinds; changing trends in college requirements or employment possibilities; historical information. The list goes on and on.

There must be careful decisions about the information that is really needed for the work at hand. Not all the desirable information will be obtainable. Some data could be collected, but the expense would be more than the budget allows or the work would require more time than is available.

Within a participatory planning project, it is likely that some individuals will have special interest in data collection. Sometimes individuals will carry out a research or data collection assignment which will be of great value to the process. It may be desirable to set up a separate data-gathering

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55. Schmuck, Richard A., "Incorporating Su rvey Feedback in O.D. Intervention", a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1973.

team which works in close cooperation with the team that proposes to use the data in planning.

A valuable adjunct activity to the planning process can be the distribution of really valuable informational material to persons other than those within the planning groups. Articles and books may turn up which are especially helpful to other principals or teachers within the school or system. Information may be collected in surveys, such as needs assessments, which will help in some other school or district process. The operation of a "free press" system, in which the planners distribute materials they are quite sure will be valued, can help build good relationships throughout the system. This should be selective. Mass distribution of lots of materials is not very useful.

In the Palo Alto project, some Project materials became the basis for in-service workshops for teachers. Others were used in classes for special reports or discussion sessions. These were not planned uses of the materials, but opportunistic advantage was taken of materials and data which had been collected for other purposes.

Lists of materials which are available within the planning project can be distributed inexpensively throughout the school or system. Such lists in Palo Alto resulted in numerous requests for materials, such as needs assessment reports, special studies, and certain articles and books.

Special Comments on Surveys

Surveys are widely used in planning to obtain data on opinions and attitudes about schools and school programs, as well as to uncover specific perceived needs. A few basic rules about surveys deserve mention.

(1) After a determination has been made about the information desired from the survey, someone with training and experience should be engaged to construct the actual survey questions.

(2) Any survey must be field-tested before it is actually used. Field testing consists of giving the survey to persons who will not be in the

actual sample or population covered by the final instrument. Inevitably, field tests turn up difficulties and result in rewriting of questions. Sometimes the whole survey instrument is scrapped.

(3) Surveys must be developed with analysis of the data in mind. For example, open--ended questions are often useful and easier to construct than short-answer questions. The responses, however, are difficult and tedious to summarize and present to the planning groups.

(4) Numerous methods are available for handling survey data on computers. If it is possible to utilize a computer, the survey instrument should be constructed in consultation with those who will be coding it for the computer and making the computer runs.

(5) Sampling presents special problems. It is not difficult to draw a sample of any school population, whether parents, teachers, or students, directly from school lists. Random procedures may be used, or simpler "systematic" sampling methods in which every nth name is taken from the list.

It is very difficult to draw a satisfactory sample from the community at large. In that case, sampling requires the use of census data or published sources of names and addresses, such as city directories or reverse telephone directories. The response rate on school surveys is usually very low among persons who have no children in school. The rate is also low among parents, students, and teachers, unless one puts forth considerable effort to follow up initial mailings with phone calls, letters, and even visits. For accurate sampling purposes, it is better to draw a relatively small sample, but to follow up very carefully to obtain a very high response rate.

Sometimes surveys are conducted by mailing out the survey forms to every parent, or every student or teacher. The response rates are often very low when this procedure is followed.

Low response rates can be interpreted in different ways. First of all, survey results with a very low response rate, such as 20 percent, are not

valid for scientific purposes. They do, however, provide useful information, since those who do respond are interested in the schools and are likely to be opinion leaders and persons who will make their presence felt.

In the Palo Alto project, some surveys were conducted in two or three different ways. In one case, all those who attended special meetings were given survey forms, and a random sample received forms through the mail, differing colors being used in each case. The two produced very similar responses, indicating that persons really interested in the schools had probably responded in both instances.

A very large sample was used for an initial community survey. This was followed a year later by a repeat, using the same survey instrument with a small sample. The results were virtually identical. This is to be expected, if the sampling has been done carefully, since by following the rules of sampling available in textbooks on survey research, little further information or reliability is obtained by samples larger than the size specified for statistical reliability.

The public at large is likely to mistrust small samples, however, even though you know they are statistically valid. A sample of three hundred persons is very large, but it sounds very small in the heat of discussions concerning important school policies.

In planning, accurate information with carefully-constructed surveys and careful sampling is important, but it is equally important to keep the confidence of the community. Some combination of good sampling procedures with additional opportunities for every interested person to complete a survey form is one workable compromise.

If surveys are to be included within a planning project, they deserve to be done with care and with some professional help if at all possible. Textbooks on sampling and survey procedures are readily available. Some suggested ones are the following:

Mendenhall, William, Lyman Ott, and Richard L. Scheaffer, Elementary Survey Sampling. Belmont, Ca., Wadsworth Publishing, 1971.

Raj, Des, The Design of Sample Surveys. San Francisco, Ca. McGraw Hill, 1972.

At the other extreme, surveys can be carried out with such academic rigor that they consume too much time and energy. The solution is caution in setting out to conduct a survey, with assistance to do it as efficiently as possible.

A Final Comment on Information and Data-Gathering

Don't get lost in information collection. The process should be a creative one, not a mechanical one. Very useful information can very often be obtained from surprising sources, and relatively inexpensively. Standard sources of information should be used after the problems for planning have been clarified, but they may not be of much help. These include local college libraries, the ERIC system, and county offices of education.

Experience indicates that it is better to have a smaller amount of data, thoughtfully collected, and well-used, rather than utilizing too many resources in compiling a great mass of information.

Data from a few carefully-planned interviews, or from a small number of well-constructed meetings with teachers, administrators, parents, or others, can produce vast amounts of data that may serve the needs of the planning process very satisfactorily. If there is no clear use for the data, don't go after them.

In a planning process, the feedback of data is important. A survey report must be made available to persons who participated in the survey. Information from interviews and small group meetings must be fed back to those who took part. This serves two purposes: first, the feedback process produces additional data as persons react to it; and second, confidence in the planning process is maintained.

J. THE MANAGERS' ROLE IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Participatory planning is one tool that can be very useful for responsible, strategic decision-making in a complex, changing society. It's a means

for learning about and creating new possibilities. If the planning process is real, the planners will be searching to articulate values, establish priorities, and develop programs. Internally, it is closely tied to both ongoing management and to organizational change. Externally, it's a process of improving and developing the relationships between the schools and the community. The skills required in participatory planning are increasingly the skills needed in all phases of school management.

This does not mean that any effective school administrator can effectively coordinate a participatory planning project. Some specialized skills are needed. Theses will be discussed below.

Several advantages result from making use of a skilled project coordinator who is not the line manager. More concentrated effort can be given to the project by such a coordinator. The job is separated from the problems of evaluation and threat to status which are always present when staff persons work directly with line administrators. Most importantly, a good special project coordinator may develop the special skills needed more fully than a general administrator can be expected to do. While any member of a school staff may be trained to serve as coordinator of participatory planning, perhaps as a part-time assignment, it is a serious mistake to appoint someone who is not really qualified for the role. Specialized training is available in such topics as organizational development, at U. C. L. A., at the University of Michigan, and at other universities. Several highly reputable private organizations offer useful training, including the NTL Institute in Arlington, Virginia, and University Associates, La Jolla, California. Some standard college courses in education and behavioral science have direct application to planning. Courses specifically designed to prepare persons for leadership in participatory planning may exist, but are not known to the author.

The management requirements of participatory planning should not be underestimated, in time and energy demands or in skill demands.

Six major components of the manager's role in participatory planning are as follows:

1. The system interface role.

Participatory planning takes place within the context of a school or school system, as a change process. Not everyone will be directly involved in the committees and teams, except on special occasions. It is crucial to keep closely in touch with those who are not directly involved in a manner which allows them to express both feelings and ideas and to influence the planning process as it goes along. This is particularly true for school staff members. It is, of course, true for others as well.

Check actively with persons throughout the school to see if they know what is being discussed, understand it as the planning groups understand it, and especially if they understand the implications for their own work.

If at all possible, avoid reaching the point of implementation, only to have many persons say, "I didn't know about this", or "This is not what I thought it was". Problems should be faced within the planning process whenever possible, rather than in the implementation process which follows. There will be enough problems left to worry about during implementation.

It is not enough to understand the new plans and proposals conceptually - they must be understood behaviorally. People need to realize the difference which the implementation of the plans will make in their own behavior and work patterns.

Horror stories abound in print about well-conceived plans which collapsed during implementation because people thought they knew what they were getting, only to find themselves in a tangle of misunderstanding, resulting in rejection of "well-conceived" plans.[56]

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56. Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein, op. cit.

Even though the planning groups are also responsible for communication and interaction with persons throughout the school and community, there is no substitute for the interface role of the project managers.

2. The group process role

Group process has been discussed extensively throughout this Handbook. The greatest problems in participatory planning may be group process problems, depending upon the scale and complexity of the project.

The manager's role is to see that the planning process works well. That cannot be done without careful attention to group process issues: structuring good processes to begin with, and following up with assistance and trouble-shooting.

This set of manager responsibilities includes interpersonal issues in groups, such as developing teamwork and dealing with problem members. It also includes task-oriented process issues: helping groups make decisions, analyze problems, and move ahead with the planning. If the manager can successfully work with these problems himself, so much the better. Often the investment of some funds in competent consultation will pay off.

3. The technical research role

Within participatory planning, some technical research skills can be very important. If a survey is to be undertaken, for example, it should have the benefit of assistance by someone skilled in questionnaire construction, sampling, and data analysis. Horrible examples of surveys developed and fielded by untrained groups can be cited. Results can be uninterpretable and can cause much frustration and loss of time and goodwill.

Sometimes participatory planners conduct research involving interviews, observations, and related field methods. These activities can be very useful, but they will be helped immeasurably if they are assisted by someone with training.

The manager's role in participatory planning is to encourage research of various kinds, but to see that research activities are undertaken

with enough qualified help to produce usable results with reasonable effort.

These days, volunteers can be found within almost any community to assist with research. Interviewers for commercial survey companies, city planners, business analysts, psychologists, and others have some familiarity with good practices.

4. The therapeutic role.

The term "therapeutic" is used only partly in jest. Participatory planning puts people into new relationships. They may be put down, offended, angry, hurt, frustrated, and may experience all kinds of personal feelings and attitudes. The purpose of the project is to conduct planning and bring about organizational change, not to deal with personal feelings and problems but, of course, the two can be closely related. People need to grow personally and individually through the process of organizational change. In a related vein, Chris Argyris, the noted organizational consultant, argues that creating effective research relationships is similar to conducting effective therapy.[57] The project manager must communicate a deep personal concern for the individuals involved, and for the success of the project, but he must also insist that the participants take responsibility for working through the problems. The manager cannot afford to be manipulative, on the one hand, or indifferent, on the other.

5. The planning role.

A participatory planning process is a planning project. The manager will need to understand the stages in planning, the gathering and use of information, and the appropriate form for the finished product. Points of particular

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57. Argyris, Chris, "Creating Effective Research Relationships," in Caro, Francis G., Readings in Evaluation Research. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1971.

difficulty in the planning process are the following:

a. Defining the problem in operational terms so that work can begin.

b. Translating proposed solutions into workable operational goals.

c. In the case of a complex project, synthesizing various components into a unified plan.

No one else in the project will have a clear vision of the planning process and its eventual outcome. This must be provided by the manager, as the expert in the planning process itself.

6. The teacher role.

Finally, participatory planning involves a great deal of teaching and learning. It can be said that the management job is not to plan but to teach planning.